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OF THE

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LETTERS

FROM THE

MEDITERRANEAN;

CONTAINING A

CIVIL AND POLITICAL ACCOUNT

OF

SICILY,

TRIPOLY, TUNIS, AND MALTA:

WITH

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES,

ANECDOTES AND OBSERVATIONS,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF

THE PRESENT STATE OF THOSE COUNTRIES, AND THEIR RELATIVE SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

BY E. BLAQUIERE, ESQ.

" Fas est et etiam ab hoste doceri."—*Virgil.*

" Quiconque prefere sa propre gloire aux sentimens de l' humanité, est un monstre d'orgueil, et pas un homme."—*Fenelon.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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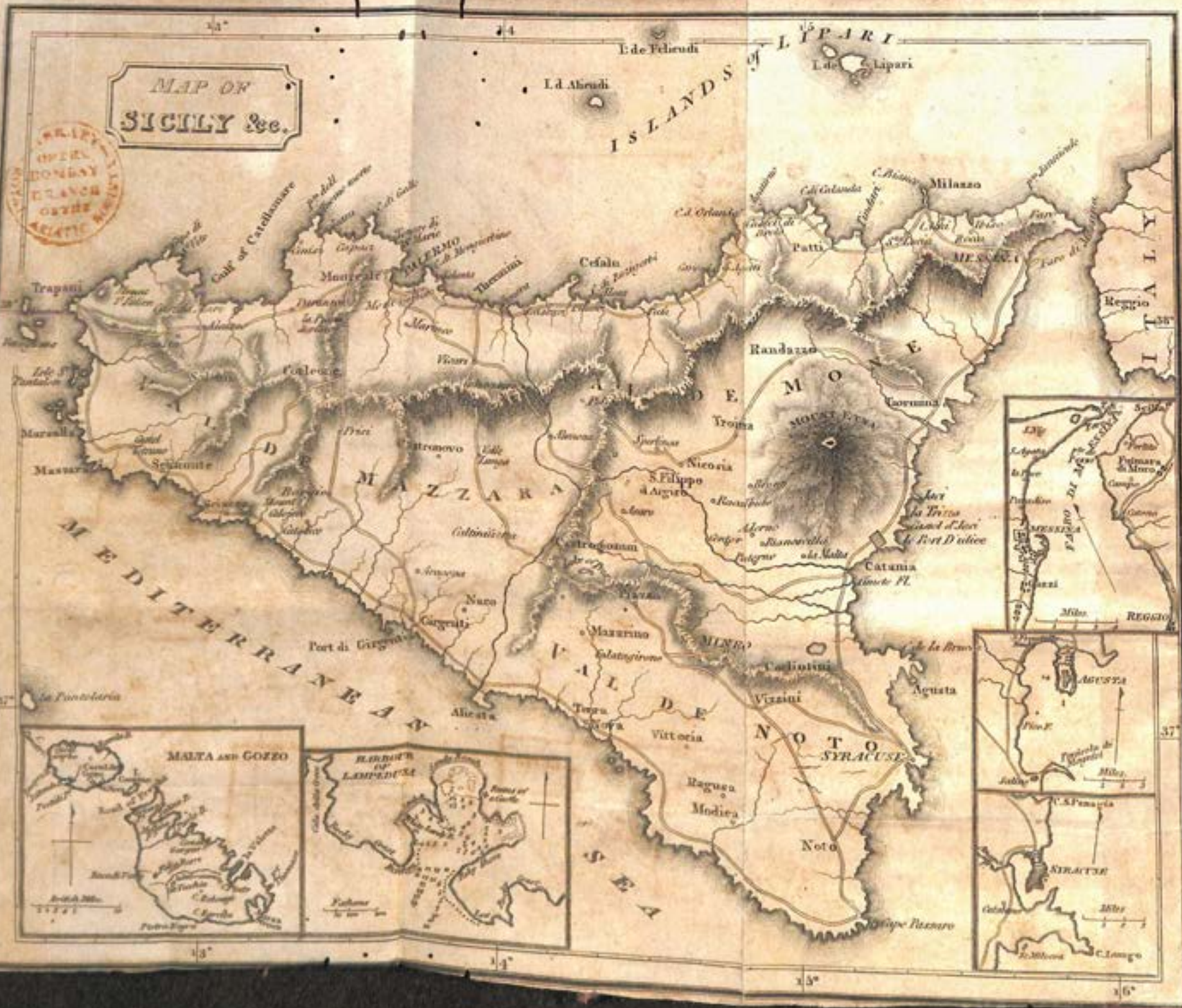
ERRATA.

Page 27, for Scipio Oefritus, read Scipio Orfitus.
— 176, in the poem, 19th stanza, 2nd line, for swept read swift.
— 248, for *Tripoly*, read *Tunis*.
— 311, — *citta* read *citata*.
— 312, — *consirvile*, read *consimile*.
— 316, — *consuli*, read *consoli*.
— 366, — Figers, read Fyers.


MAP OF
SICILY &c.
I. de Felicudi
I. d. Alicudi
I. de Lipari
ISLANDS of LIPARI
Milazzo
Patti
Cefalu
Trapani
Marsala
Mazzara
Calatafimi
Castelvetro
Sciacca
Girgenti
Licata
Terra Nova
Alicata
Randazzo
Troina
Nicosia
S. Filippo d'Argiro
Catania
Aci Reale
Aci Trezza
Augusta
Syracuse
Vizzini
Vittoria
Ragusa
Modica
Noto
Cape Passaro
Port di Girgenti
Mazzarino
Caltanisetta
Piazza
Trapani
Marsala
Mazzara
Val di Noto
Val di Demone
Mineo
Mediterranean Sea
Sea
MALTA and GOZZO
HARBOUR of LAMPEDUSA
AUGUSTA
SYRACUSE
REGGIO
Miles

LETTERS

FROM THE

MEDITERRANEAN.

LETTER I.

Quid tibi pastores Libyæ, quid pascua versu,
Prosequar; et raris habitata mapalia tectis;
Sæpe diem, noctemque et totum ex ordine mensum
Pascitur, itque pecus longa in deserta sine ullis
Hospitiis; tantum campi jacet omnia secum
Armentarius Afer agit, tectumque, laremque
Armaque, Amyclæumque canem, Cressamque pharetram
Non secus ac patriis acer Romanus in armis
Injusto sub fasce viam cùm carpit et hosti
Ante expectatum positis stat in agmine castris.

VIRG. *Georg.* 3.

Preliminary Observations—Geographical Delineations—Description of Tripoly, &c.

Tripoly in the West, 1811.

REPEATED visits to this regency having enabled me to make some remarks on its present civil and political relations, I address them with pleasure to you; as, from our intimacy, you will, I am sure, excuse my inaccuracies of style and

composition, while the facts adduced may be of future utility to those of our friends who reside at Malta.

Whether in a political or commercial point of view, Tripoly offers to the speculator very solid and extensive advantages; although it will doubtless excite surprize, when I inform you, that not a single British merchant has formed any establishment in the country, for a period of more than the last fifty years: this singular circumstance can only be imputed to the unaccountable ignorance in which we still remain, with respect to the coasts of the regency; for surely it cannot be supposed, that an English merchant would willingly sacrifice his health and property on the pestilential shores of the Orinoco, while the fertile and salubrious plains of northern Africa open to him such inexhaustible sources of wealth.

That part actually under the Bashaw's present dominion, extends from the island of Jerbi to Cape Razatin, a line of coast eight hundred miles in length; its interior extent is, however, owing to the frequent interruption of the desert, extremely irregular: but along the whole coast, and for several miles inland, it produces many valuable articles of commerce, and is every where susceptible of the greatest improvement. There are, on different parts of the coast, many positions on which highly beneficial establishments might be formed; of these, and the places already but very imperfectly known to us, I shall attempt to give you a short descrip-

tion.' Although geographers have made no regular division of Tripoly into provinces, there are four recognized by the government, viz:—The Mediterranean and Maritime, on the sea-coast, and those of Garian and Messulata in the interior. The first of these, beginning at Port Bomba in lat. 32° 17′ north, and 23° 20′ east longitude, extends round the *Pentapolis* to the bottom of the Great Syrtis where the *Philænorum Aræ* are supposed to have been erected, and embraces the whole of the ancient *Cyrenaica*, now called Lybia.*

* The Cyrenaica, so called from the city of Cyrene, was also denominated the Pentapolis, from the five cities it contained, and which for several centuries were in a most flourishing condition. The successors of Batus, first king of this state, reigned for upwards of three hundred years, after which period it became a commonwealth, and had many sanguinary disputes with the republic of Carthage about the limits of their respective territories. The celebrated story of the *Aræ Philænorum*, as recorded by the ancient historians, is simply as follows:—Both nations being anxious to establish a boundary, without any more bloodshed, it was mutually agreed, that two men should proceed on foot, from a certain point in each other's dominions, and that wherever they met, was to be the future frontier. The Philæni, two brothers, having set out from the territory of Carthage, made such extraordinary expedition, that they arrived at the bottom of the great Syrtis, before those of Cyrene had scarcely left the Pentapolis. The latter were so affected by this unexpected circumstance, that they insisted on another trial being made, adding, that if the Carthaginians agreed to it, they would willingly suffer themselves to be buried alive on the very spot upon which they might happen to arrive; in the event of a refusal they insisted that the Carthaginians should undergo the same fate: when these generous youths, apprehensive of some failure in case of a second attempt, and

The Maritime stretches from thence to the Island of Jerbi, in latitude 23° 25′ north, and longitude 11° 38′ east; Messulata and Garian are comprehended in an extensive tract of mountainous country, lying south-east of the capital, between it and Fezzan, which is also tributary to his Highness the Bashaw.

The regency is bounded towards the east by the desert of Barca, on the south by Fezzan, and on the west by Tunis and the country of Dates. A reference to D'Anville's Ancient Geography will shew you, that this part of Lybia was formerly distinguished by five celebrated cities, viz. Arsi-

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fired by that love of country, which animated people in those days, determined to sacrifice themselves for the public good, and were accordingly immolated on the spot!—The memory of these heroes was long dear to the Carthaginians, who raised two splendid altars where the brothers were buried, and instituted annual sacrifices and games to their manes.

Whatever degree of probability this anecdote possesses, it seems that the Carthaginians never occupied any part of the Cyrenaica; it was also the first province Rome had in Africa. Tasso's idea of the Cyrenaica is both just and very happily expressed—

Rodi e Creta contane inverso 'l Polo
Non scerne; e pur lungo Africa sen Viene
Sul mer culte e ferace, addentro solo
Fertil di mostri e d' infeconde arene.
La marmarica rade; e rade il suolo
Dove cinque cittadi ebbe Cirene.
Qui Tolomita; e pri con l' onde chete
Songer si mira il fabuloso Lete.

Gerusalemme, Lib. c. 15.

noë, Cyrene, Appollonia, Ptolemais, and Berenice; all of which, according to the same author, together with the island of Crete, were converted into a Roman province, under the last sovereign of Egypt, Ptolemy, surnamed Apion, who entered into a league with that power. The splendid remains of these places, which still attract the traveller's attention, added to the amazing fertility of soil every where to be met with, and facility of communication with the interior of Africa, are sufficient to prove that it must have been a country of great opulence formerly, although now so little known or even thought of by Europeans.

Port Bomba is formed by a cluster of small islands, seven leagues east of Cape Razatin, the Ras Iathuc of antiquity, possessing all the attributes of a safe and capacious harbour, capable of affording shelter to any number of ships, and surrounded by a fine country. Bomba is nearly destitute of inhabitants, and seldom frequented except by the coasting vessels of the country and the Bashaw's cruizers. The Paliurus of Pliny discharges itself into the sea a little to the eastward of Bomba,* but is now only an inconsiderable stream: from this place towards the Syrtis Major,

* The Temple of Jupiter Ammon and Fountain of the Sun, visited by Alexander the Great previous to his conquest of India, were, according to the authority of Pliny, only four hundred miles from Cyrene; it would surely be worth the attention of some society to discover the site of that celebrated structure, if any part of it still remains.

the land is high. There are several anchorages, although no harbour of consequence, till you come to Bengazi. *Darnis*, with the slight alteration of Derne, its present name, is capital of the province, and the seat of its government, which is generally intrusted to the Bashaw's eldest son, or some other officer enjoying his entire confidence.

This town is situated close to the sea; fifteen leagues west of Razatin, and contains about six thousand inhabitants: its defences consist of a decayed wall and old castle, mounting five pieces of cannon; the garrison usually consists of two or three hundred Arabs. As to the surrounding country, it is equal to the finest in the regency; and though but a very limited space about the town is cultivated, the inhabitants are abundantly supplied with every necessary of life, besides being enabled, when permitted, to export large quantities of cattle. The bay is exposed to easterly and northern winds, but has excellent anchorage, and ships of any class may approach near the shore, it being very bold. It is important to observe, that vessels passing by Derne may obtain supplies of water, and fresh provisions, at a very trifling expense; and Lord Keith's fleet received supplies from this place during the memorable campaign of Egypt. The French government, aware of the importance of Derne, sent Gantheaume with his squadron, and a body of troops, there, in 1799, to disembark them for the purpose, as he informed the Governor, of reinforcing the army of

Buonaparte in Egypt; but his request was not acceded to, owing to the jealousy of the Bashaw; and the French admiral did not think it prudent to force a landing. What his real views were it is difficult to conceive; but several persons here entertain no doubt whatever, that they embraced something more than a desire of merely passing through his Highness's territory. I regret particularly that the French soldiers were not permitted to land, as, whether intended to form a permanent establishment there, or proceed to Alexandria, their visit would have led to the discovery of many interesting facts relative to a country, as yet unexplored by modern travellers; and they would have most probably paved the way for a British colony long before now. From Derne to Bengazi, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles, there are no obstacles to obstruct the navigator: the principal landing places between them are Teukera, the *Arsinoe* of antiquity; Marsa Suza, formerly *Apollonia*, and the grand port of *Cyrene*, which, according to Pliny, was eleven miles from the sea. Here ships may anchor with great safety, though both places are nearly without any inhabitants, except the hordes of wandering Arabs who occasionally visit them.

Bengazi, the ancient Berenice, and where the poets of Greece placed the celebrated gardens of the Hesperides, contains five thousand inhabitants, has an excellent harbour for ships of two hundred tons burthen, and is defended by a wall

and castle near the sea, upon which eight guns are mounted. This place, so celebrated in antiquity, and the chief emporium of the Pentapolis, is even now particularly worthy of attention, as, from its local advantages, and being surrounded with a most luxuriant country, we may still hope to see it, at some future period, regain a portion of its former splendour. It has lately been frequented by a number of vessels from Malta, under the English flag; and is the only point in that part of the regency from whence the Bashaw suffers exports to be shipped. There are some quicksands in the vicinity of the harbour, which render the approach sometimes rather dangerous; however, very few accidents have happened, and there are pilots always ready to conduct ships in.

From Bengazi, along the whole coast, and in many parts of the interior, several fine specimens of Greek and Roman architecture are to be seen. I am sorry that the celebrated Mr. Bruce had not sufficient time to remain in this part of Africa previous to his departure for Egypt. As it was, he seems to have been very active during his short stay there, as will be seen by the following extract from the Introduction to his Travels, which serves to shew how much might have been expected from his further researches. "Approaching now the sea-coast, I came to Ptolemais, the work of Ptolemy Philadelphus, the walls and gates of which city are still entire. There is a prodigious number of Greek inscriptions, but

there remain only a few columns of the portico of an Ionic temple, in the first manner of executing that order; and therefore, slight as the remains are, they are treasures in the history of architecture, which are worthy to be preserved; these are in the King's collection, with all their parts that could be recovered."* I am surprized that Mr. Bruce did not point out the utility of excavating the places he passed through: should the British government be induced to encourage that pursuit, I have no doubt but that a diligent search for statues, and other remains of antiquity, in the Cyrenaica, would be crowned with incredible success. In fact, the whole coast and interior present an inexhaustible field of research to amateurs.

From Bengazi, the Gulf of Sydra, or Syrtis Major, commences, and forms a semicircular line of coast, nearly four hundred miles in length to Cape Mesurata, formerly *Caphalæ*. The land round the Gulf is very low, and the pilots of this place assert, that there are several parts of it where ships of any class might anchor in perfect safety during the heavy north-easterly gales, which sometimes prevail during the winter. We are, however,

* Page 46. It is surely a desideratum that the drawings made in this part of Africa by Mr. Bruce should be given to the public. *See his Introduction*, in which is the account of his journey through Tunis and Tripoly; the whole is highly interesting.

completely ignorant of their situation, and every other circumstance relative to its navigation, as it is ever represented as covered with dangers. Here also the traveller's admiration is often excited by the appearance of several fine ruins, particularly those of *Macomades Syrtis* near Cape Sort, and many others.

The inhabitants who live on the shores of the Syrtis Major, consist of Arabs, who are scattered about in small bodies of two and three hundred each; they are influenced in their choice of situation, by the local advantages of the country, and only prevented from forming themselves into larger communities, by the Bashaw's severity and frequent acts of violence towards them.*

A Sicilian slave who accompanied the Bashaw in one of his predatory expeditions against the Arabs in 1810, has informed me, that about one day's journey into the interior from the south-eastern extremity of the Syrtis, he saw the remains of a very large city, great part of which were in a state of high preservation.

This neighbourhood was formerly inhabited by the *Nasamones* and *Lotophagi*, a people famous for their savage mode of life and piracies. They are often noticed by the poets of antiquity. Lucan speaks of them in the following elegant terms:

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* It is generally thought by historians, that the Carthaginians never extended their conquests beyond the Syrtis Major.

Hoc tam segne solum raras tamen exserit herbas
Quas Nasamon gens dura legit, qui proxima ponto
Nudus rura tenet, quem mundi Barbara damnis
Syrtis alit; nam littoreis populator arenis
Imminet, et nulla portus tangente carina
Novit opes. Sic cum toto commercia mundo
Naufragiis Nasamones habent.
Regna videt pauper Nasamon errantia vento
Discussasque domos. Volitant à culmine raptæ
Detecto Garamantæ casæ.

Festus Avienus, another of the Latin poets, gives the following lively picture of the Lotophagi.

Hanc rursum gens late prisca virorum
Lotophagi includunt. Durosque Nasamonas inde
Accipe, queis quondam populorum examina multa.
Versaverœ solum, multæ sonuere per agros,
Balatu pecudes: nunc lati jugera campi
Et grege nuda jacent, et sunt cultoribus orba.

Notwithstanding the encouragement given by the African Society to those meritorious individuals who have been enterprizing enough to penetrate into the interior of this interesting continent, their success has hitherto been comparatively limited, and the fate of the unfortunate Mr. Park cannot be too deeply lamented; for had that justly celebrated traveller survived his late journey, he would doubtless have communicated to the public many highly important discoveries.

While so many laudable attempts are making to explore and establish ourselves in countries, from which infinitely fewer advantages can be derived, it is most singular, that this part of Africa should

have been so entirely neglected for a period of more than thirty years, during which no attempt whatever has been made to enlarge our knowledge of its geography or resources. I am, however, induced to believe, that our mode of sending travellers abroad, at the charge of private societies, instead of the government, is a serious defect, and often the cause of their failing. The importance and increased degree of confidence inspired by the patronage of government is great; and the stimulus to discharge a public duty cannot be equally called forth or excited by any private association, however respectable; nay, it sometimes happens, that there is a scarcity of funds for the object in view. This was strongly exemplified on the occasion to which I am now about to allude, that of the African Institution, established in 1788, and of which too much cannot possibly be said in praise, as its formation seems to have embraced every object, whether of a political or commercial nature, and does the highest honours to its members. Its early progress was, however, marked with that sort of apathy, which but too frequently awaits the greatest designs, particularly those calculated to promote the interest of humanity; and in order to explore an unknown continent the first subscriptions did not exceed the sum of 430 pounds!—With this scanty pittance scarcely sufficient to provide for a person's wants before he left the British capital, it was resolved to commence the great work of penetrating the interior of Africa.

For this purpose, the enterprizing Ledyard, and Mr. Lucas, late consul general at this place, were selected by the society as proper persons to undertake two of the most interesting journeys hitherto attempted by any English travellers. The former landing at Alexandria was directed to proceed to Cairo, and thence to accompany one of the caravans into Nubia, from whence he was to cross the whole continent in a western direction, and re-embark at Sierra Leone. Poor Ledyard, the most spirited traveller of modern times, deserved a better fate; for having been unexpectedly delayed for some months at Cairo, where many obstacles were thrown in the way of his intended journey, he contracted a bilious disorder, which carried him off in a short time. Thus were his patrons deprived of an invaluable acquisition, and the objects of his mission totally frustrated, before it had scarcely commenced. Mr. Ledyard's inquiries at Grand Cairo were however attended with considerable success, as he ascertained that a constant and almost regular communication is kept up between that place and Sennar, the capital of Nubia; as also with several other parts of Africa, particularly Fezzan and Tombuctoo.*

* The caravan from Cairo to Fezzan performs its journey in fifty days, and from Fezzan to Tombuctoo in ninety; they travel about twenty miles a-day, which makes the distance from Cairo to Fezzan 1,000 miles, and from Fezzan to Tombuctoo 1,800, from Cairo to Sennar it is 600.—Vide *Modern Traveller*, vol. ii., part 14.

Mr. Lucas's attempt, though equally ineffectual, gave rise, however, to a small work published soon after, on his return to England, and founded on the information he received from some travelling companions and from the Governor of Mesurata, where his labours, as an African explorer, seem to have began as well as ended.

Being sent out with orders to go from this place to Fezzan, and from thence on to Tombuctoo and the Gold Coast, he arrived here in October, 1788, and shortly after accompanied a small caravan on its way to Fezzan: but having reached Cape Mesurata, it was discovered, according to Mr. Lucas' own account, that the disturbed state of the country rendered it impossible for him to proceed any farther; he therefore relinquished the scheme for that time, but determined not to return home without some materials for his employer's gratification. He collected several very interesting particulars, many of which are so applicable to the object of this letter, that I have been induced to transcribe a few for your information, although the whole account is recommended to your perusal, and very well calculated to excite the further curiosity of the British government in making future researches.*

* Of Fezzan, the Phazania of the Romans, Mr. Lucas speaks in the following terms:—"The kingdom of Fezzan is situated south of Mesurata. From Mesurata, through districts little inhabited or cultivated, but not naturally unfertile, it is eight days' journey to Wadaw, where every refreshment for a caravan is

On the western side of the Syrtis there is a lake mentioned by Strabo, at present called La Suca, which is now one of the most productive

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to be procured. In five hours the traveller arrives at the commencement of the desert of Soudah; four days are requisite to cross this desert; it contains no water; the basis of its soil is a soft stone, and it produces no vegetable but the kali. The traveller rests at Zeghen, which only affords dates of the worst quality, and some Indian corn called gassob; from whence, in one day, he arrives at Sabbah, probably the Saba of antiquity, where are to be seen the remains of an ancient castle and other ruins, which equal in extent those of Lebida. The neighbouring fields abound with rich vegetation; sheep and domestic poultry are very numerous. In four days, over a similar country, the traveller reaches Mourzouk, the capital of Fezzan. Mourzouk is surrounded with a high wall, and has three gates, at which a tax on all goods, provisions excepted, is collected on their entering the town. It is situated on the banks of a small river, but contains numerous springs and wells; it was formerly built with stone, and the vast ruins of ancient edifices form a striking contrast to the humble cottages of earth and sand of its present inhabitants; it is about 390 miles nearly southward of Mesurata.*

"Eastward of Mourzouk the town of Zuila is situated; it contains considerable remains of ancient buildings, cisterns, and vaulted caves. Jermah is situated southward of Zuila, and also contains numerous majestic ruins, with various appropriate inscriptions.

"Tessouwa is a considerable town eastward of Mourzouk, near which a river of a deep and rapid course has lately been overwhelmed by the moving sands. More remote, in a north-east direction, is Temissa, where the caravan of pilgrims from Bornu and Nigritia, which sets out from Mourzouk, purchase

* Although Mr D'Anville does not mention the capital of Phazania, Mourzouk is doubtless built on its site.

salines in the Mediterranean, both as to the quantity collected, and goodness of its quality. The Venetians were, formerly, entirely supplied from

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provisions for their journey to Cairo," &c. A number of other observations relative to the commerce, manners, and customs of the country, occupy the concluding part of Mr. Lucas's third chapter: he has, however, made a few remarks on the government and laws of Fezzan, which deserve to be transcribed, and prove that these people, unaided by science or education, entertain ideas upon legislation and religion, that would not discredit the most enlightened countries of Europe.

"The Fezzaners are rigid, but not intolerant Mahometans. Their government is monarchical, but the king uses his authority to promote the happiness of his people; the rights of property are revered, the taxes are moderate, and justice is administered by a firm and temperate hand; consequently, the inhabitants of Fezzan are affectionately attached to their sovereign." And in another place, "The just and impartial, but severe and determined, administration of justice, of the then King of Fezzan, was frequently described to Mr. Lucas, by his fellow travellers. The following custom proves the singular respect with which he is esteemed by his people: if a man, having injured another, refuses to go before the judge, the plaintiff draws a circle round him where he stands, and solemnly charges him, in the king's name, not to leave the place until the officer of justice, in search of whom he is going, shall arrive; and such is the defendant's fear of punishment for disobeying the injunction, or so great his dread of perpetual banishment by withdrawing from the kingdom, that he submissively waits, in his imaginary prison, the arrival of the officers!

"Offences are punished according to their magnitude, by the bastinado, fines, imprisonment, or death, the shereefs (priests) are sometimes punished, chiefly by dishonour; but the indignity they esteem most reproachful, is that of having dust thrown upon their heads."

this place, but it is now very seldom frequented except by the natives, who are enabled to load their largest vessels without being put to any other expense than that of paying a small duty to the Bashaw. At Cape Mesurata, twelve leagues north of La Suca, there is a large village; and

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The fourth and fifth chapters of Mr. Lucas, in which, from the same authority, he proceeds to give an account of the Zahara, Cashna, and Tombuctoo, are particularly well worth a perusal, and it is much to be regretted, that he did not avail himself of the offer of his companion Shereef Mohammed, of whom Mr. L. procured so much useful information—for in one part of his book there is this observation: "The Shereef Mohammed considered travelling in this part of Africa as attended with little danger; and cheerfully proposed to conduct Mr. Lucas through Fezzan and Cashna, across the Niger, to Assentee, which borders on the coast of the Christians." I cannot help repeating my surprize, that considering the many advantages we possess of sending political and commercial agents abroad, particularly in Africa, we should still be so very ignorant of this country, which was formerly so great an acquisition to the Roman empire; in fact, if the accounts of Ptolemy and Pliny are to be credited, there must still be the remains of at least fifty cities and towns between the Lesser Syrtis, Cydamus,* and Port Bomba. We are also informed by the same writers, that the Roman arms, under Balbus the Younger,† were extended much farther than Cydamus to the Garamantes and Tabidium, where colonies were established, and large cities built.

* Now Ghadames, two hundred and fifty miles south of Tripoly.

† This victorious general was born at Gades, a city of Tripolis, and remarkable as the first Barbarian honoured with the triumphant chariot by the Romans. He flourished in the brilliant reign of Augustus; and in addition to other favors, both he and his uncle were declared free citizens of the empire by that celebrated patron of merit.

within a few miles of the Cape, an old castle, without guns, where the Governor of Mesurata resides: there are numerous tribes of Arabs, called Gooardi, living in the neighbourhood. The road from this place to Tripoly, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles, runs generally in a line with the sea coast, and is much frequented; and the anchorage under Cape Mesurata, is very excellent in westerly winds. From this place, the land decreases in height, till you come within forty miles of Tripoly; it then continues very low as far as the Island of Jerbi.

Ninety miles west of Mesurata, are the remains of a renowned city, the Leptis Magna of antiquity,* said to be founded by a colony of Phœnicians; and which paid to the government of Carthage a daily tribute of one talent, (£360). It is also celebrated for having been the birth-place of the Roman emperor Severus, who died at York.

The following short description of these interesting ruins, communicated to me by a friend, who passed three days on the spot, may serve, in the absence of a more detailed account, to afford you some gratification. "The road from Tripoly to Lebida, leads through Tajoura, and is, in some places, rather circuitous. Crossing what the Arabs denominate the five Rivers, which are, in fact, nothing more than conduits for the torrents of winter, and

* Ea (Leptis) singula in dies talenta, vectigal Carthaginiensibus dedit —*Pliny.*

arriving at the base of the Mesurata mountains, you turn to the left, and pass through the villages of Lagarta, Maraboot, and Sidi Benger, leaving those of Tumbrak and Saleen to the westward. A considerable portion of this road runs through an uncultivated country, till it turns near the mountains, where there are numerous hordes of the Gooardi Arabs. The extensive ruins of Leptis Magna are situated close to the sea, which appears to have made some encroachments on a part of them; those which I saw, extend about three miles in length southward, and nearly two in breadth. The bed of a river runs from the mountains directly through the ruins, which consist of gateways, walls, an immense number of pillars, some of which are of the finest granite, broken statues, and marbles with inscriptions, in Greek, Latin, and Punic characters; together with the remains of an aqueduct. There are also a great many sculptured friezes, which appear to have belonged to some temples; the remains of several Roman baths are visible near the city; and I observed, about a mile from the ruins, an oblong terrace of fine Roman pavement, of considerable extent; several ruins about this place evidently denoted that it must have been the site of a theatre. There are the remains of a large edifice close to the sea, which appears to have been a species of fortification. Cameos, coins, medals, and bronzes, are frequently found at Leptis by the Arabs, who sometimes take them to the

capital for sale, but as often destroy them, from motives of superstition. To the amateurs for antique researches, there cannot be a greater inducement for excavating at this place, than that their efforts would most assuredly be attended with the greatest success; for, in their own language, it is virgin ground, as, with the exception of a few of the fine granite pillars, taken away more than a century ago to ornament a palace of Lewis the Fourteenth, this place has scarcely ever been visited by any European travellers.

The limits of this communication, preclude the possibility of my transcribing for your amusement, any of the numerous and curious inscriptions I copied, during my stay at the above spot. As to the site chosen for this city, it could not possibly have been more beautiful; the ground from the ruins rises in a sloping direction towards the Mesurata mountains, only five miles inland, and which afford a most charming prospect; the surrounding country bears very considerable marks of cultivation, and by what I could collect from the country people, the climate in that part of the regency is truly enviable."*

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* Of Leptis, Mr. Lucas gives the following account.

"Here stand the remains of the town of Lebida; they consist of the ruins of a temple and several triumphal arches. The fertility and beauty of the neighbouring plains discover the reasons which induced the Romans to erect a sea-port town in a place where there is no natural harbour: a luxuriant vegetation, totally unaided by the Arab inhabitants, extends for five-and-

Leaving this place, and pursuing your course westward, there are no objects worthy of particular attention, if we except several ruined towers, and a few inconsiderable villages. Tajoura,* within ten miles of Tripoly, is a large and populous village, with a good summer road-stead for shipping. The people of this place are supported by cultivation, and send large quantities of poultry, fruit, and vegetables, to supply the capital. From Tajoura to Tripoly the country assumes a most agreeable appearance, being like a continued garden all the way; the road is also tolerably good.

Tripoly, the capital, and Æo of antiquity, is situated in latitude 32° 54′ north, longitude 13° 18′ east, and built on a neck of land, which projects a short distance into the sea. It is surrounded by a high wall, flanked with six bastions. There are two gates, one on the south, and the other towards the port on the east; the Bashaw's castle stands on the south-east quarter of the town; towards the north, which flanks the harbour, there is a semicircular battery of two tiers, mounting in all twenty pieces of heavy cannon; this communicates with the city by a mole, on which twelve

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twenty miles to the eastward, and the beauty of the scene is increased by the remains of a stupendous aqueduct, which conveyed water to Lebida from a distant pool."

* The Brother of Heyradin Bashaw, surnamed Cacha-diablo by the Spaniards, and a celebrated Corsair, was proprietor of Tajoura in 1550.

more large guns are placed; another battery, of eight guns, is connected with the latter, and extends southward; on the west there is a fort built, but owing to its being insulated during the heavy winter gales, no guns are kept there; it is connected with the city by a small mole, half a mile east of the castle: and on the beach there is a battery, of eight guns, called the English fort; it commands the harbour, but is open on the land side.

The castle is an irregular and extensive square pile; when viewed from the port, it has a very respectable appearance. It has one grand entrance, and two sally points; the former is towards the town, and one of the latter communicates with the dock yard, which runs along the northern side of the castle, the other looks towards the country. The ramparts are very high, and well stocked with brass cannon, yet it is not considered as by any means fit to resist the attack of a British naval force, although the Americans, when at war with his Highness, in 1804, did not make any serious impression on it; against the assaults of Moors and Arabs it is justly thought to be impregnable. The state hall in the court, near the entrance, is a very elegant room, both from its shape and structure; a handsome throne is placed at the extremity opposite the doors, and on each side are pillars of dark marble, which give this apartment a very pretty effect. The present Bashaw has constructed another beautiful apartment, where he usually receives the consuls and naval officers of European

powers. There is nothing else very attractive within its walls, as the whole is divided into courts, passages, houses, apartments irregularly piled on each other, and stables without order or distribution. The harbour of Tripoly, though not very spacious, is perfectly safe throughout the year, and capable of containing a large fleet of merchant ships; small frigates, whose draught of water does not exceed eighteen feet water, may also ride there in perfect safety.* It is formed by a reef of rocks, which run in an eastern direction from the northern extremity of the town; although this affords the greatest shelter to ships during the prevalence of north-east gales, the only wind injurious in Tripoly, it might, at a very trifling expense, be converted into a capital pier, which, together with the construction of a light-house, would render the port uncommonly good. The idea has often been suggested to his Highness the Bashaw, but I apprehend its execution is reserved for some more public spirited period than the present. It very frequently happens that merchant vessels are driven to leeward of Malta in winter, when it is often difficult to make that island; in these cases they might, with the utmost propriety, take shelter here, as in westerly gales the anchorage is good, not only in the harbour, but two miles off the town.

The caravanseras, mosques, houses of the dif-

* His Majesty's ships Winchelsea and Iris, both frigates, were at an anchor in the harbour for some weeks, in the year 1794.

ferent consuls and higher classes of the inhabitants, in Tripoly, are usually built of stone, and regularly white-washed twice a-year. The dwellings of the lower orders are fabricated of earth, small stones, and mortar; they are all of a square form, with a court in the centre, and never more than one story high; the court is generally paved with Maltese stone, which has made that an article of considerable commerce here. The roofs of the houses being perfectly flat, serve the purpose of an agreeable promenade; as also to receive the rain water, which descends through the pipes into cisterns constructed below for its reception. The private houses, with the exception of those which belong to foreign consuls, have no windows towards the street; the better sort of houses consist of two stories, and are by no means so sumptuous as those of Tunis or Algiers, being destitute of all ornament, and very rarely furnished with more than carpets and a few cushions. Bazars, or market-places, occupy a considerable portion of the city, and are kept in excellent order. The new bazar has not been long built; it is a very spacious and airy building with an arched roof, which affords shelter in winter, and shade during the intense heat of summer. It is appropriated exclusively to the sale of woollens, Levant produce, and slaves brought from the interior, particularly those of Bornou and Tombuctoo.

Of the several mosques, the only one worth particular notice here is that which fronts the

Bashaw's castle; it was built in the reign of Hamet, head of the Caramani family, and is a very elegant structure of its kind. As the town is occasionally subject to a scarcity of water in summer, (the Bashaw having, for political motives, destroyed an aqueduct, which formerly conveyed an abundant supply from a spring outside the walls,) there are only two public baths in Tripoly; the higher classes have, however, a small one generally attached to their houses. The public one intended for males is very neat and spacious; the dome is perforated with small holes to admit the vapour with which the bath is heated, and in the centre there is a large marble slab, upon which bathers recline; after being well rubbed with gloves made of rough serge, and having their limbs stretched, they are washed, and then retire to a coffee room, which communicates with it through a long passage. There is another public bath of a description similar to the above, but exclusively appropriated for the use of females.

Little can be said in favour of the inns at Tripoly, although they answer all the purposes of convenience to the country people. There are one public and several private caravanseras in the town. These buildings differ in no great degree from other houses, except from the great number of apartments they generally contain; the upper rooms are usually fitted up for the reception of visitors, while those below are reserved for merchandize and stabling. The regulations esta-

blished at the public inn are highly creditable to the government, and might be adopted with advantage in more civilized countries than this. An officer of the Bashaw is invariably stationed at the *Skeepar* or porch of the building, who registers every article that enters or goes out, and is completely answerable for losses of every kind that may take place within. For this useful precaution, a trifling pecuniary consideration is exacted from every visitor. Of European taverns there are three, kept by a Maltese, Spaniard, and Frenchman, under the protection of their respective consuls, but neither of these are remarkable for cleanliness or other comforts.

In point of tranquillity and cleanliness, Tripoly might be taken as a model by some European towns in the Mediterranean; and though it possesses neither the elegance nor regularity of Valetta, you never hear of acts of violence being committed in the streets, and robberies are altogether unknown. This is the result of a well regulated police, for which all the towns of Barbary are very remarkable; for, independent of a nightly patrole, there is a guard stationed in each street, who is responsible for whatever may occur in it of an improper nature. There is, besides, always a number of people kept for the express purpose of sweeping the town; a precaution of the greatest utility, and to which, amongst others, we may attribute the health generally enjoyed by the inhabitants.

The chief specimen of antiquity to be seen in this place is a superb triumphal arch, built of fine marble, and ornamented with several bas reliefs, inscriptions, &c.: it was erected in the reign of Pius Antoninus, by the consul Scipio Oefritus. The greatest part of this beautiful monument is buried in the earth, which reaches nearly to the middle of it, and the upper part is unfortunately mutilated: enough, however, remains to excite both curiosity and admiration; and should any future traveller be induced to examine it more particularly, his labours will doubtless be amply repaid by the relics to be gained in its vicinity.

A more fertile or luxuriant country than that which is seen in the immediate neighbourhood of this city cannot be imagined. Leaving the gate, which opens on the land side, the prospect on every side is extremely gratifying; country-houses, extensive pleasure-gardens, groves of orange-trees, and innumerable fountains, together with the incessant progress of vegetation, form an assemblage of rural beauty here, which is very rarely to be met with any where. The fairy scene does not, however, reach more than five miles inland, when nothing but an immeasurable waste of sand is presented to the eye, and forms a striking contrast with the cultivated fields to whose edges it approaches. It should be observed, that a want of industry, and proper encouragement from the Tripoline government, are the only reasons why

more of the desert is not cultivated and inclosed; as in a very short space of time the places which are now covered with sand would become highly productive.

From Tripoly the coast runs very low to the island of Jerbi, one hundred miles west of it, and the boundary of his Highness's dominions. Tripoly Vechio, the Sabrate of antiquity, and Zoara, famous for its salines, are the only places of any consequence on that side of the capital. The former has a good summer anchorage, and small harbour for vessels of a hundred tons: it is defended by a castle mounting two guns, but that is in a very ruinous state; the village is composed of an irregular range of huts, and does not contain more than two thousand inhabitants. The country round this place is very fertile and productive. At Zoara there is another anchorage, and a small village, the inhabitants of which derive considerable support from working in the salines in its neighbourhood. West of this place, the country is entirely abandoned to the various tribes of Arabs who live by their flocks, and are continually changing their position, either from choice or necessity, so that it is impossible to form any correct idea of their numbers.

Those who approach the coast of Tripoly should be particularly careful in obtaining early soundings, owing to the land being in general so very low. There are, however, a number of dangers attributed to this part of Barbary which do not in

reality exist; nor is there any part of the regency I have visited, wherein the shore cannot be approached to within a mile, and very few spots where ships might not anchor with safety. The usual depth of water is from fifteen to thirty fathoms.

With respect to the dangers in the Gulf of Sidra, about which so much has been reported, I do not think them half so formidable as described by many people; and if ever that part of the coast is properly surveyed, I entertain no doubt but that several good anchorages will be found there.

The following may be considered as good sailing directions for coming into this harbour. The bank which stretches to the eastern rock is three cables and a half in length; the sea breaks in several places, but on its eastern end you have from four to five and a half fathoms water. The channel between the reef and a bank east of it, in many parts of which there are not more than eleven feet water, is five cables' length wide, and is no where less than five and six fathoms deep. To sail into the harbour, you go through this channel, by bringing the English fort, on the left, to bear south-half-west by compass, and steer directly for it, till you bring the middlemost small spire in the town, with a black top, to bear west by south; it will then be in one with the northernmost of two trees, which stand far back in the town. The channel is rather narrow here, and has only four fathoms water in it; if you bring the southern-

most tree on with the spire, you will run over two small spots with eighteen feet water on them. After you have passed the fifth rock on the reef, you are clear into the port, and may anchor in four fathoms. There are some banks with not more than three and a half fathoms on them, upon which mooring anchors may be laid out.

There are six spires in the town; the three highest have black tops; the southernmost appears to stand on the Bashaw's palace, but is a little behind it. The one mentioned as a proper mark for going in, is rather to the southward of the Portugueze flag-staff, which is the highest in Tripoly.

West and north-west winds are generally found to prevail on the coast during autumn, winter, and spring; in the summer a regular and cooling sea-breeze sets in from the eastward, and blows quite fresh, between the sun's rising and setting; during the night you have a breeze off the land. The sea-breeze does not extend to more than forty miles from the coast. The current varies very much in its rapidity, but is constantly known to run in a south-eastern direction. Seamen should recollect, that there is a considerable in-draught at both the Syrtes, particularly the one on this coast between Cape Mesurata and Bengazi.

The necessity of making ourselves more fully acquainted with the coast of Tripoly is self-evident; with our unexampled naval preponderance in the Mediterranean, it is fortunately in our power

to know, and to do every thing necessary for the furtherance of our interests; and I am satisfied that any steps which government may take towards the attainment of this object will be amply and speedily repaid. It is a singular and almost incredible fact, that the coast from Jerbi, as far as Alexandria, is scarcely noticed in any of the Italian charts, whilst those of England merely contain the names of a few capes and head-lands, all inserted upon the most vague information. The above has long been a great source of injury to ourselves, and of surprize to our enemy, who have adopted a very different and infinitely wiser plan. The French government certainly have the merit of availing themselves of all occasions, for the purpose of ascertaining every thing relative to the states of Barbary; and, after the expedition to Egypt, distributed their emissaries over several parts of the coast. I have met many of these persons; they are invariably good classical scholars, and thoroughly versed in the Arabic. Several of them have already sent to France memoirs, giving a minute account of the geography, population, state of agriculture, productions, and antiquities, of the countries where they resided. These works have also been ornamented with designs, and copies of all the inscriptions with which the ruins through Africa abound; it is from this system alone that Buonaparte has been taught to value and appreciate the importance of all those countries which are as yet exempt from his ambitious dominion.

LETTER II.

Hinc Gætulæ urbes, genus insuperabile bello
Et Numidæ infieni cingunt, et inhospita Syrtes.
Hinc deserta siti regio, lateque furentes
Barcæi. VIRGIL, *Æneid*, lib. 4.

Population—Psylli, and Anecdotes of them—Occupations and Manufactures—Ancient Race of the Lotophagi—Climate of Tripoly—Seasons—Productions and Commerce—Caravans and Interior Trade—British Interests, as connected with Tripoly, both Civil and Political—Military and Naval Supplies—Miscellaneous Observations.

Tripoly.

AFTER the geographical observations in my last letter, you will naturally expect some account of the country and its inhabitants. In the first place, I must observe, that upon the precise extent of population in the regency I have found it impossible to form a correct opinion, nor has it ever occurred to his Highness to make any enumeration of his subjects, concluding that if there are a sufficiency of hands to fulfil the objects of war and agriculture, an increase would be superfluous, and productive of no future benefit. In the capital, the number of souls does not exceed

twenty-five thousand; and besides the Moorish residents, there are a great many Jewish families, which inhabit the western side of the town. As these people can have no share in the government, they generally apply themselves to trade, in which they are very much encouraged by the Moors, who cannot traffic without their aid. This race is indeed remarkable all over Barbary for their expertness in accounts, and ability with respect to languages; even the Bashaw himself cannot do without them, and they are often the commercial, as well as political, agents of his Highness. No jewels, or gold dust, are ever purchased by the Bashaw, without being previously inspected and estimated by some of this fraternity. The providing wearing apparel, and other necessaries for the harem, is also confided to Jewesses. Others apply themselves to handicraft work; and all the gold and silver ornaments for the Moorish and Arab women, are made by Jews, who also manufacture gold and silver lace.

These people are under the necessity of pleading constant poverty, in order to evade the pecuniary demands of the Bashaw; they are, however, severely taxed, and have a Cayd, or chief, appointed by his Highness, to judge of all differences between them: but when a quarrel arises among people in good circumstances, the Bashaw takes care to become umpire himself, as it affords him a good occasion of extorting money from both parties. Besides Jews, there are in Tripoly a few

Maltese, French, and Spanish families, who are all supported by commercial pursuits.

You doubtless recollect Mr. D' Anville's allusion (in his short account of Lybia) to an extraordinary race of people said to have inhabited the shores of the Syrtis Major, and called by the ancients Psylli, to whom was ascribed the singular virtue of curing the bites of serpents, and many other curious attributes. It is no less singular than true, that traces of the Psylli still remain, and they are frequently seen in Tripoly. The accounts communicated to me respecting them are truly surprizing; in the first place, I understand, that, previous to their going abroad, they prepare themselves, for several days, by a particular regimen, which produces a species of violent frenzy, and then they consider themselves as inspired beings, and are believed to be so by the people here, who rank them amongst their saints, and hold them in the greatest veneration. When prepared to astonish the rabble, they sally forth, half naked, foaming at the mouth, and exhibiting every sign of madness, except that of biting the Moors. It is, however, necessary to have a guard accompanying them, to prevent any bad effects; for if they meet a Christian they make many efforts to seize him, with a view, as they declare, of eating him up. The Psylli are frequently known to devour live cats, dogs, fowls, &c.; they are also taken to visit sick persons, and supposed to be endowed with the power of curing all diseases; their madness

subsides generally in a few days, after which they are not seen or heard of for several months.

The regency is inhabited by three different races, viz. Moors, Arabs, and Turks who have established themselves in the country; there are besides a variety of foreigners, native Jews, renegadoes, and Negroes, of whom some are free, and the rest in slavery. The Moors, having but little chance of rising in the offices of government, from the marked preference given by the Bashaw to renegadoes and Negroes, apply themselves to trade, and the manufacturing of muskets, pistols, baracans, boots, and slippers, the dying of cloths and skins, embroidery on leather, in which they are particularly expert, and various other industrious occupations. They are also much employed in cultivation and farming, according to their own rude manner; for the latter pursuit, a wide scope is opened to them in the gardens of the Mischea near the town.

During the reign of the present Bashaw's father, Sidi Ali, there was an extraordinary race of people, inhabiting the Mesulata mountains, that lived in caves under ground; they were doubtless descended from the famous Lotophagi already noticed. It is even asserted here, that the utmost efforts of the Tripoline government have not succeeded in destroying them.

An officer in the service of his Highness has given me the following account of the manner in which these people live. They first dig a large

square cavity in the earth, about twenty feet deep, while its length and breadth are proportioned to the number of people designed to become its future inhabitants: from each side several subordinate apartments are made, for the purpose of being converted into sleeping places, magazines, &c. The entrances go in a sloping direction, and are sufficiently high to admit a camel; and during the night, or in the day time, both the family and its flocks take refuge in these receptacles, when apprehensive of danger from an attack.

In stature the Tripolines seldom exceed the middle size. The Moors have a very fair complexion; while that of the Arabs is dark and sallow. They are all remarkable for regular and athletic forms, and I have never in the course of my visits to this place, seen a cripple or deformed person amongst them.

The climate, throughout his Highness's dominions, is very salubrious: but, of course, very subject to the effects of the scirocco, as you are in Malta. This irksome, and sometimes destructive wind, generally prevails during the autumn; its continuance seldom exceeds three days, and to avoid the unpleasant effects of it they are obliged to be shut closely up in their houses, as in your island, and in Sicily. It is attended with a suffocating heat, and drives a great quantity of sand from the desert, which is often very injurious to vegetation. The coast of Tripoly has not been visited by plague, or any other pestilential dis-

ease, for a period of more than thirty years. Ophthalmia, as in all the countries of Africa, is the prevalent disorder; but very much heightened for want of proper skill in its cure. I have found, upon inquiry, that the climate, of this place in particular, has ever been found to agree uncommonly well with all the European residents.

Although inoculation has frequently proved highly useful to the Tripolines, yet the medical men of the country are ignorant of its application. What an important event would it not be to introduce this signal blessing all over Barbary?

There is probably no country on earth so highly favored by nature, in respect to a rapid succession of the crops, as this is; the rains generally begin after gathering the dates, towards October, in the beginning of which month the Arabs plough and sow their grounds. At this period of the year, those who inhabit towns prepare for winter, by white-washing their houses, and repairing cisterns destined to receive the rain water; for springs are never relied on in this country. In December and January the weather becomes dry, and extremely pleasant, like our spring in England; in the beginning of April the market before Tripoly is abundantly stocked with cattle, poultry, and vegetables of every kind; towards June, almonds, figs, apples, pears, plums, peaches, nectarines, grapes, and melons, are in season, and incredibly abundant. The fruit of Tripoly generally possesses

a most exquisite flavour, the vegetables are very fine, and fully equal to those of our own country, both as to quality and quantity.

Having endeavoured to illustrate the geographical boundaries of the Regency, it now remains for me to give you some idea of its productions and commerce; both objects of considerable importance, and particularly worthy the attention of those who may be desirous of deriving any commercial advantages from this country, while to the statesman and politician it certainly cannot be unacceptable. On approaching the coast of Tripoly, and being first presented with an extensive waste of sand, which is only occasionally relieved by a cluster of date trees, the traveller cannot be induced to believe that he is in the neighbourhood of a most fertile region, producing every necessary of life, and many valuable articles of commercial speculation. Such is, however, the case; and the following list of exports serves to prove, that when trade is once more revived in Europe, Tripoly will not be an unprofitable resort to the British merchant. The exports are as follow;—viz. wool, of an excellent quality; senna, and several other drugs; madder roots; barilla; hides; goat and sheep skins, dressed; salt; trona;* ostrich feathers; gold dust; ivory;

* Trona is brought in great quantities from Mendrah, in this territory, to Tripoly, where it is exported to Tunis and Morocco. The Jews formerly sent some to Leghorn. In appearance, this

gum; dried fruit, and dates;* lotus beans;† cassob venene; saffron; bullocks; sheep; and poultry.

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article resembles borax, and is used by the Tripolines in all their dyes. The people of Fezzan, and many of the Moors, mix this alkali with their snuff, and chew a small piece of it with their tobacco.

* The dates in the vicinity of Tripoly differ very much from those of Egypt, Fezzan, and the rest of Barbary, the genus being infinitely more luxuriant. If the skin of this fruit is cut through round the middle it readily comes off: they are of a yellow, brown, green, black, and red colour; the latter are termed horse dates, and are given as food for that animal, while the stones are consigned to the camels.

† The lotus tree, on the fruit of which the savage Lotophagi of antiquity were said to exist, abounds in the Mischea, and is lofty and extremely umbrageous; the fruit is contained in a pod not unlike those of the tamarind, and when ripe is both sweet and nutritious. Formerly a considerable quantity of raw silk formed one of the exports from the Regency, but its cultivation has latterly been nearly altogether neglected; the mulberry tree is, however, to be found near the town in great numbers; so that this valuable article may at any time become a staple commodity of the country. To the foregoing may be added the castor tree, found in the vicinity of Tajoura, where a great deal of that oil is made annually; it has not, however, as yet, been exported in any quantity. On the coast, fish of every kind are most abundant; but, with the exception of a few boats employed from the capital, fishing does not form a part of public industry. I have been informed, by several sea-faring people, that there are some coral banks on different parts of the coast. The cassob seed, so little known in European countries, constitutes in Tripoly the most nutritive flour imaginable, and forms a principal part of the people's diet: it is contained in a spike, about three inches in length, and as many in circumference, this grows on

From every inquiry on the subject, I am led to believe that the quality of all the foregoing articles is equal to any of a similar nature exported from the coasts of Barbary; and as to the prices of Tripoly, I can assert that they are much below those of Algiers and Tunis. The duties imposed by his Highness are very fluctuating, and usually depend on the state of commerce.* Cotton has been cultivated very successfully by several individuals in the Regency, but owing to a want of encouragement, does not form an article of export.

Fish are very abundant on the coast of Tripoly, and in great variety: they consist of almost every species found on the coasts of European countries,

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the top of a reed, which seldom exceeds three feet in height; the seed is about the size of large partridge shot, and of a light lead colour; it is very abundant in general. Bishnah, as little known with us, is a most favorite dish with the lower class of Arabs, as cuscasoo is with the Moors. This seed was brought from Soudan about fifty years ago, until which it was altogether unknown here; the stem is scarcely two feet high, and generally bears several ears; the seed is very small, and of a light red colour; when prepared it looks something like hasty pudding, and is called Bazeen by the Arabs, who usually eat it with a profusion of oil and red pepper; of the latter, it is truly astonishing to observe what a quantity they can devour without seeming to feel the smallest effect from it.

* The treaty with Tripoly stipulates that the subjects of his Britannic Majesty shall enjoy the privileges and advantages of the most favored nations.—See article XXIV. in the Appendix, and, in fact, all that document, which is very much in want of revision.

but fishing is by no means an object of solicitude or industry with the people.

The exportation of corn, horses, and mules, is prohibited by the Bashaw to his subjects; but they sometimes form an article of very profitable speculation to himself; he, according to the custom of other Barbary princes, being the principal merchant in his own dominions; a practice which has long been found highly injurious to the commerce of these countries. It is, however, among the abuses which must be tolerated, nor is there any means of removing the evil under a despotic form of government like that of Tripoly. The mischiefs which arise from so unjust a monopoly may be considerably checked by the timely interference of the British government, which is unfortunately inattentive to this important point. Without entering into a more elaborate examination of the gross impropriety of a sovereign becoming a trader, I shall proceed to recapitulate the goods imported here, which differ very little from those received in the other ports of Barbary; they are as follow:—viz. cloths, of every quality and colour; sugar; tea; coffee; spices of all sorts; woollen and Manchester stuffs; damasks; silks of various colours and descriptions; gold and silver tissues, laces, and threads; cochineal; indigo; iron; hardware of all kinds; small wines; spirits; capillaire; gunpowder; cannon; muskets; pistols; and sword blades; naval stores of every description; planks and beams for building ships and

houses; common looking-glasses; toys; cotton threads; Tunisian caps, &c. &c.

The quantity of imports depends naturally on the state of commerce in general, but to those who may be inclined to barter, a ready market is always found here; the obstacles occasionally put in the way of merchants, arise from the Bashaw's jealousies, influenced as he is by Jew brokers, and those about his person; it remains, therefore, that the strictness with which the treaties are composed, should be properly executed, to prevent the innumerable extortions, that prevent merchants from visiting this place more frequently. A great deal might be effected if vessels, coming to Tripoly upon commercial speculations, were invariably escorted by one of his Majesty's smaller vessels on the Malta station, the appearance of which is sure to produce a powerful effect upon the people. The profits upon imports vary from sixty to one hundred per cent., but are very rarely less than the former.

The sale of spirits and wine, is an exclusive monopoly of the Bashaw, who farms it out to the best bidder, and this is perhaps one of the greatest evils felt by Europeans here: the right of importing these articles is at present vested in the hands of a Jew, who also holds an office under his Highness, and for this privilege alone pays twenty thousand Spanish dollars per annum; thus every one is obliged either to purchase from the Jew, or pay him an exorbitant demand for leave to import

his own spirits. As may naturally be supposed, this monopoly is extremely injurious to the interests of Malta; and is, besides, universally regretted by the Tripolines themselves; who, notwithstanding their religious tenets, are by no means inimical to the liberal use of strong liquors. Being upon this subject, it may not be altogether irrelative, if I give you a short description of their favorite beverage, in the absence of rum or brandy, which they certainly prefer. It is called lackby, and extracted from the date tree, before the fruit becomes ripe, by the following process:—the bark of the tree being taken off towards the top, and all the branches, a deep circular cavity is made in the centre; from this an incision is cut on the side for letting the liquor out, which is almost immediately excited by the heat of the sun, and is discharged into a jar held by a Moor, who contrives to raise himself up by means of a rope; a large jar full is generally collected from each tree in the course of the twenty-four hours.*. In the morning this juice is extremely cool, and even delicious; it has some slight resemblance to the cocoa-nut milk: when left for a day or two it ferments, and imbibes great

* The lackby runs generally for a month, at the rate of two gallons a day, and the tree is then marked; the fruit does not grow again until the expiration of three years: it sometimes happens that a tree bears the operation of tapping, if I may use the expression, five or six times; it then dies, and is converted into rafters for houses: so that the date tree is infinitely more important than many people suppose in Europe.

strength; in this state the natives drink large quantities, and become intoxicated, their debauches of lackby usually continue three days!

Should the monopoly of importing wines and spirits be removed, a matter which might be effected by a formal request from the naval Commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean, a new and highly profitable source of trade would be opened to the British merchant.

The method of grinding corn in Tripoly, although not the most prompt or convenient, is not without some share of ingenuity. Millstones are worked by a camel yoked to the extremity of a beam running transversely into a large piece of wood, one end of which is fixed perpendicularly in a pivot placed on the ground, while the other plays through a hole cut in a beam which passes from one side of the roof to the other: the millstones are different from each other, one, the lower, being convex, is placed about three feet from the ground, and has a groove to receive the other, which fits into it. The corn descending through them is very finely ground, and received below in a receptacle constructed for that purpose. Little, indeed, can be said for the excellence of the flour, as it is in general impregnated with small particles of sand, introduced into the wheat ears during scirocco winds. Windmills, which would answer this people's purpose so much better, are not adopted, from their dislike to innovation or improvement. The domestic mill is

very much used, there being one in all the better sort of houses; it is formed of two small stones perfectly flat; a stick perpendicularly fixed in the centre of one of them passes through a hole bored in the other's centre, which lies on its top, through which the grain is dropped from the hand; near the edge of the upper stone is placed a handle of wood, for the purpose of moving it round; these machines are particularly simple, and may be worked by one or two persons; the quantity of corn which may be ground by them in the course of a few hours is very considerable. It is doubtless a mill of this sort to which the prophet St. Matthew alludes, chap. xxiv.: "Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left."—Ver. 41.

At present the trade is chiefly confined to Malta, Tunis, and the Levant; the vessels employed are Maltese, Ottoman, and a few under the Tripoline flag; upon all ships entering the harbour a considerable port duty is exacted.* An

* I understand that our present consul, upon a suggestion of the late Sir A. Ball, relinquished his established fee from English vessels, in order to give more encouragement to commerce. This was a display of liberality seldom acted upon in this country, and which cannot be too highly applauded.

COINS OF TRIPOLY.

The Bashaw coins gold sequins; and brass tokens washed with silver are taken as an equivalent for the gold and silver currency: there is also another small brass coin called bohunseen,

extensive caravan passes this city every year from Morocco, on its way to Mecca; this journey is,

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and of which fifty go to a Spanish dollar: Spanish, Sicilian, and Turkish silver and gold are current in the Regency. Accounts are kept in piastres, as those of the Portuguese are in milreas.

Relative Value of Tripoline Money with that of England.

	£.	s.	d.
Venetian Sequin . . .	0	12	0
Tripoline Do. . . .	0	8	6
Piastre	0	1	4
Bohunseen	0	0	1½

The weights and measures of this country differ very little from those of Tunis.—The Cantar consists of 100 Rotuli—equal to 112 lbs. avoirdupois.

Measures of grain are called Cafizo—each equal to about two English quarters.

The mataro of wine is equal to two gallons and a half English; that of oil is equal to five gallons English.

Measures of length are called Pika—one of these is equal to thirty-two yards of ours.

The undermentioned outline of the current prices of native and foreign produce, is also added for further information on the commerce of this place.

EXPORTS.

Articles.	*Price in Spanish Dollars.*	*Quantity.*
Madder Roots . .	from 6 to 10 .	per Cantar of Tripoly.
Wool	—— 6 — 8 .	Do.
Senna	—— 6 — 8 .	Do.
Sheep Skins	16 . .	Do.
Bullocks' Hides	12 . .	Do.
Fezzan Dates	3 . .	Do.
Bullocks	from 12 to 20 .	per Head.
Sheep	—— 2 — 3 .	Do.
Fowls	2 . . .	per Dozen.

to the Moroquines, an object of religious devotion, as well as commercial speculation; they are

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N. B. An impost of five dollars per head was lately paid on cattle, but it is now reduced to two and a half, owing to a representation from Sir C. Cotton, Commander-in-chief off Toulon: the established duty on other articles of commerce, whether for export or import, is three per cent.

IMPORTS.

Articles.	*Price in Sp. Dol.*	*Quantity.*
Cochineal . . .	from 8 to 10 .	per Rotula of 16 oz.
Gold and Silver Thread	. 2 . .	per oz.
Wide Galloon	2½ . .	Do.
Loaf Sugar	16 . .	per Cantar.
Lisbon Do.	12 . .	Do.
Coffee	20 . .	Do.
Fine Cloths	18 . .	Canna of Malta, 2½ yds.
Second Cloths	8 . .	Do.
Third Cloths	6 . .	Do.

Linens, cambrics, nankeens, ticking for mattrasses, silk stuffs of every colour and quality, velvets, and damasks, produce a great profit at all times.

CONTINUATION OF OTHER PRICES.

English Gunpowder—50 Spanish Dollars per Cantar.
Sicilian Earthenware—30 per cent. profit.
All kinds of Spice—great profit.
Alum—Ditto.
Sook—Ditto.
Sarsaparilla—Ditto.

Warlike Stores—such as cannon, muskets, pistols, bullets, iron, planks, and every description of timber, whether for ships or house building, pitch, tar, rosin, cables, masts, blocks, anchors, sails, and canvas, are invariably bought up with avidity.

Provisions imported are exempt from all duties whatsoever.

consequently charged with several articles for the markets of Arabia; these usually consist of Halsan silks, damask, taffety, ivory, ostrich feathers, Fezzan dates, Venetian glass and beads; they bring back Eastern striped silks, muslins, calicoes, Mocha coffee, drugs of various kinds, cornelian and other precious stones. It frequently occurs, that many who compose part of these caravans become over-fatigued with their journey, and in such cases ships are freighted here and at Tunis to convey them to Alexandria; the length of their land voyage is very uncertain, as it depends in a great measure upon the internal state of the country. The caravans are well armed; and continually subjected to very severe attacks from the Arabs, through whose territories they are obliged to pass.

The Fezzan and Gadarnes caravans come here generally twice a-year, and bring the fruits of their previous journey to Bornou and Tombuctoo, which consist of gold dust, pearls, ivory, ostrich feathers, negroes, saffron, drugs, senna, camels' hair, camels, mules, antelopes, &c. These commodities are exchanged here for coarse European cloths, a few silks, baracans of the country, Tunisian caps, powder, muskets, (which ought to be very light and have long barrels,) pistols, scimitars, hardware, glass beads, toys, Venetian looking glasses, &c. The quantity of gold dust brought by these caravans is very considerable, and they are said to be remarkable for plain and honest dealing with the inhabitants of this place, for whom, to do

them justice, the same cannot be said. The traders who come from Bornou and Soudan are remarkable for an unsuspecting simplicity of manner, which is unknown to people of a more refined character, they have frequently deposited large quantities of gold dust, which was only tied up with a small string, at the European consular houses, and on taking it away the next morning betrayed no symptoms of alarm as to its quantity having diminished. In their dealing with the Jews and Tripolines there is also a most striking contrast observable, as, to their fair dealing honesty, there is nothing but craft and duplicity opposed.

Caravans from the interior come here in the winter, and return towards spring; and they would give every facility to an European traveller who might accompany them properly prepared, a precaution seldom sufficiently attended to. It is much to be regretted that the unwise and impolitic system of government adopted by his Highness the Bashaw, which keeps him in almost continued hostility with the Arabs inhabiting the mountains, should have most materially injured the caravan trade, and in many instances suspended it for some time. If this had not been the case, the commercial importance of this regency would have been infinitely greater than it is at present. Nothing has contributed more to the Bashaw's injury than a line of conduct so contrary to his true interests; and however averse his Highness may be to improvement, I am convinced that, if surrounded with better advisers,

and stimulated by the British government to give this trade all the encouragement it fully deserves, the most beneficial results might be anticipated, as well in favour of the general interests of Tripoly, as of British manufacturers in particular. That a more prompt and efficacious communication might be established between Bengazi or this city, and the interior, than from Morocco or Tunis, cannot be a matter of the least doubt. It is also known here that the route from Derne to the shores of the Red Sea is much frequented, and considered as by no means the most difficult part of the Morocco caravans' journey. Would it not be well worth our while to point out some plan to the Bashaw by which the importance of increased interior commerce might be seriously impressed on his mind. If the suggestions tendered by our government were attended with the desired effect, a new and interesting epoch would be created in the history of commerce, while the circulation of English manufactures would not only benefit the trading interests, but be the means of disseminating civilization through a whole continent. It remains for those more experienced than myself to calculate the advantages to be derived from following up the hints, only cursorily treated upon in this sketch.

During this war, and indeed ever since it fell into our hands, Malta has experienced in a very eminent degree, the utility of possessing Tripoly amongst the number of its friendly neighbours, and constantly received from it large supplies of cattle,

live stock and other necessaries of life, which have been highly useful, not only to the inhabitants, but the naval and military depots there; however, as in most other places abroad, I regret to say that the mode we have adopted, in drawing supplies from this regency, has been distinguished neither by wisdom nor prudence. It may also be added, that in the single article of bullocks, by a different system of purchasing them, more than one half of what they have hitherto and now continue to cost the commissariat, might be saved. How this singular benefit could have escaped the penetration of government for so long a period, is really incredible. I need hardly explain to you, that it has ever been customary for the naval agent victualler, and military commissary at Malta, to enter into large contracts with individuals at that place, for the necessary supply of bullocks for their respective departments, and that a most exorbitant price (sometimes forty Spanish dollars per head, equal in the present state of the money market to £12 sterling,) has been paid for meat, which was frequently unfit for men to eat, and always uncommonly bad; whereas, by the appearance of a line of battle ship* off this port, a general annual contract might be entered into with the Bashaw for any quantity whatever, and at the very moderate price of about eighteen dollars per head. This step will

* No negotiation should ever be entered into here without a large ship to support it.

ever be most acceptable to the feelings and wishes of his Highness: if it should be resorted to, and transports sent from Malta and Sicily to take the latter away, there will be insured to government, a saving of at least 100 per cent., with excellent meat for the army and navy, and what is of still greater importance, the Maltese contractors will no longer fatten upon the credulity of the heads of departments in that island.

There is another species of supply which this country might afford us; and as it appears to have never excited the attention of our military commanders in the Mediterranean, it will be as well to avail myself of this occasion to notice it. You are doubtless aware of the scarcity of cavalry horses and mules in Sicily, together with the great expense and difficulty that has attended their being procured in the Morea and Sardinia. The breed of these animals is encouraged with the greatest care and assiduity throughout the Bashaw of Tripoly's dominions; they are also thought to be equal to those of Tunis and Algiers. Although their horses' usual height does not exceed fourteen hands, it ought not in my opinion to militate against the propriety of their being purchased* for the service of the British army, particularly when it is considered that the Tripoline horse is remark-

* Since writing the above, I understand that an officer of very inferior rank, was appointed by Lord William Bentinck, to put the above hint into execution, and that accordingly he proceeded to

able for three great requisites, viz., strength, shape, and agility. With proper management in the method of making the application, I conceive that two hundred and fifty horses might be annually exported from this regency, of a quality infinitely superior to those imported from either the above named places, and at least fifty per cent. cheaper. As the sale of horses and mules will always be monopolized by his Highness, the contract for them should be arranged during the temporary appearance of a naval force, and the person commissioned to treat ought invariably to bring a small present,* in order to soften the Bashaw, upon whom such things operate like a talisman. The points from which I would recommend the horses to be embarked are this and Bengazi; the latter is only three days' sail from Syracuse, and from the prevailing winds the voyage is usually performed in that time.

The article of lime juice, of which there is so great a consumption in our navy and hospitals, might be got here for about one half the price it costs in Sicily, from whence we draw it at present. The mules of Tripoly though not quite so large

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Tripoly in a small schooner. To the great surprize of every one he succeeded in obtaining fifty beautiful horses, and rejected many 14½ hands high, because he was ordered to buy none under 15!

* Cloth is the favorite douceur of his Highness, although he never objects to naval or military stores, diamonds, watches, &c.

as those of Tunis, are fully as well formed and qualified for fatigue; fifty of them might be annually brought here. Bullocks, sheep, and poultry, are, as already observed, very abundant throughout the regency, and owing to the small quantity of animal food consumed by the natives, an almost unlimited exportation is permitted by his Highness—Malta has, in the present year, received no less than four thousand head of bullocks, with a proportionable number of sheep, and an immense quantity of poultry. Here I cannot help deploring the ruinous monopoly which is well known to exist in the Maltese market; for however abundant the supplies may be there, scarcely any reduction of price ever takes place; whereas, if the markets were properly regulated, it would often be found that there is a large surplus in the island starving for want of fodder that might serve to feed our army in Sicily, or replenish the exhausted farms of that island.

As pasturage is thought very little of here, you cannot expect the cattle to run large: the beef is, however, very good in general; this cannot be said of mutton, which requires a great deal of fattening up at Malta, but the lamb of Tripoly is exquisite. I am surprized that the Fezzan sheep are not bred in England, or Sicily. This animal is generally the size of a three months old calf, and instead of wool is covered with a species of hair; the flesh has not, of course, the delicacy of mutton, but it is very good. This animal is also remarkable for its

docility and domesticating quality, for I have frequently seen it follow its proprietor in the streets. The common sheep tails are like those of the Cape of Good Hope, composed of fat, and usually weighing from eight to ten pounds; it is prepared as a substitute for butter by the people of Tripoly, and said to be very delicious.

Although antelopes of a large size and most beautiful symmetry are brought for the market here, they are chiefly kept as domestic favorites, and for the purpose of being exported to Malta.

The Jerboah or Pharoah rat abounds in the gardens near the city, and is a common article of food with the Tripolines; this animal is considerably larger than the European rat, and said to be very tender.

The nature and extent of my inquiries have prevented me from gaining that minute knowledge of the natural history, which would, doubtless, be acceptable to the scientific reader: that is a study, however, of considerable difficulty, and one upon which vague conjectures ought not to be hazarded; I therefore willingly leave its elucidation to more able hands. The sylphium which you often see on the Cyrenaic coins, induced me to inquire whether this plant, said by Pliny to have yielded the benzoin or medical resin, is still in existence there, but it was impossible to ascertain the fact. I am sure the future naturalists' researches in this country, will be productive of great utility to that divine science, for there is no

part of the world in which nature appears more prolific and abundant.

After what has been submitted to your consideration, it is, I presume, hardly necessary to observe, that our commercial relations with this regency are susceptible of infinite and radical amelioration; those of a political nature will be treated of in my next. In the present instance, I cannot refrain from suggesting the propriety of our taking into consideration what additional benefits we can really derive from future intercourse with this state, at a period when the rival of Great Britain has been unfortunately but too successful, in shutting our manufactures and colonial produce out of a great part of the European continent, and that the effects of her system begins to be severely felt at home and abroad. Nothing, surely, can be more desirable than having prompt recourse to those means of retaliation, which Providence has so abundantly thrown in our way:—that we have not done this in the Mediterranean, I have no hesitation in asserting; the remedies are, however, still in our hands; and I will venture to add, that, by the adoption of vigorous diplomatic ingenuity, and the appointment of able commercial agents on this coast, the baneful influence of France must cease, and her productions and manufactures, which are now unhappily often seen in the market of Tripoly, give place to those of our own country. The extreme facility with which a more extensive commercial intercourse

might be formed with his Highness's subjects scarcely requires an elucidation. The Bashaw's revenues are at present so extremely limited, owing to the almost total suspension of trade with the continent, that it is with the utmost difficulty the wants of his domestic establishments are supplied; in fact, the real or affected poverty of his Highness has become proverbial; hence the frequent acts of violence committed upon his own subjects, and the innumerable piracies of his cruizers. A system of politics like the above can only be the result of ignorance and pernicious counsellors; and it is evident, from every consideration of the subject, that the future views and conduct of this chief might be directed to a much more rational and enlightened exertion of his power. When such a desirable object shall be accomplished, there is no doubt whatever, but that the regency of Tripoly will become a source of political and commercial importance to the British interest in the Mediterranean, which has hitherto been neither known nor anticipated.

Proposals for organizing a system, by which the interests of Great Britain would preponderate every other power of Europe, even in the event of a general peace, are more properly reserved for a future communication: in the mean time, I beg to bespeak your attention to my ensuing sketch of the religion, government, manners, and customs of this country; all subjects of considerable im-

portance in themselves, and a knowledge of which is absolutely necessary before any distinct notions can be formed of their general character and dispositions.

LETTER III.

Noi possiamo a buona ragione tralasciare del tutto le viocendi di questo stato; gracche esse non sono, che una serie di scelleratezze, di tradimenti, e di stragi, a somiglianza appunto di quelle altri Governi della Barberia, le scene sono le stesse, e solamente ne sono diversi gli attori.—*Anon.*

Religion—Priesthood—Fair Sex—Character and Disposition—Education—Temperance—Polygamy—Criminal Justice—Punishments—Superstitions—Idiots—Religious Customs—Ramadan—Biram Festival—Belief in Fairies and Charms—Anecdote—Respect to the Dead—Modes of Interment—Anecdote of the Corsair, Reis Dragut—Marriage Ceremonies—Sports and Dress—Arms—Learning—State of Medicine and Surgery—Extraordinary Methods of Cure—Language—Miscellaneous Observations.

Tripoly in the West, 1811.

As this country has never been described by any writer of modern times, I trust the following attempt to delineate its civil and political relations

will not be considered too prolix. It may not be improper to assure you, that the contents of this letter are derived from the most authentic sources, as well as actual observation, and that, in thus exposing the real state of affairs in Tripoly, considerations of a private nature have yielded to the love of truth, and a due regard for the interests of human nature.

The religion professed throughout this regency is purely Mahometan, from the Bashaw to the lowest classes of his subjects, whether Moors, Turks, or Arabs; and such is the amazing veneration in which the tenets of their extraordinary prophet are held, that instances of apostacy are scarcely ever heard of amongst them: public tranquillity is, therefore, never interrupted by those rancorous quarrels about religious opinions which distract other countries, while singular unanimity of belief gives a degree of vigour to the government, that excites the surprize and admiration of Europeans. Upon the important question of toleration, they entertain ideas which one would not expect who is only acquainted with them through the medium of books; for, although Christians and Jews are looked upon with great contempt, yet they are allowed the free and unshackled exercise of their respective religions. It is even remarkable with what a degree of veneration our mode of worship and funeral processions are invariably treated by these people.

Upon the religion of Mahomet, as practised

here, little can be added to what is already written relative to it in other places. Those who are enabled attentively to observe the conduct of its followers, are struck with astonishment at the Prophet's extraordinary powers, in having impressed his tenets so deeply on the minds of men, that their force has experienced no diminution for a lapse of ten centuries, while the most civilized nations of Europe have exhibited nothing but a continued series of religious disputes.

On perusing the Koran, one is equally surprized at the strength and simplicity with which the greater part of that singular volume is compiled; and, however imperfect Mahomet is supposed to have been, as the head of a new sect, it is impossible to deny him the merit of having had a profound knowledge of the human character; while his moral precepts, adopted indeed, in great measure, from Christian revelation, would not disgrace the most enlightened philosopher of ancient or modern times. "God is great, and Mahomet *only* his prophet," are emphatical words, and convey a sublime notion of the Divinity. On the other hand, with all due deference for the Christian system, with what shadow of reason can we harshly condemn a religion which asserts the unity of God, abolishes the use of images, and makes charity, fasting, and prayer, the only means of expiating crimes. As in other Mahometan countries, the faithful here are enjoined prayer five times during the twenty-four hours, frequent ablution, and the

most abstemious mode of life. The priesthood are comparatively few in number, scarcely any expense to the community or government, and remarkable for the unaffected sanctity of their manners: they are called Maraboots in Barbary; and usually occupied in promulgating the Koran, and verbal laws of Mahomet for the general conduct of life; and celibacy is by no means required of them, as they are allowed the same number of wives as other people. Those who have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca are honoured with the title of Hadgi; and if descended from the shereefs (or caliphs), claim the exclusive privilege of wearing a green turban. The clergy's support is derived from personal property and voluntary contributions, there being no established tithes whatever; and although that admirable injunction of the Prophet, by which every mussulman is required to devote a tenth part of his property to charitable donations, is not universally obeyed, yet instances of hospitality and benevolence are very prevalent amongst all classes of the inhabitants.

You are of course aware that the women are not, by the tenets of Mahomet, supposed to possess souls, and consequently excluded from his promised immortality; they are, however, enjoined to perform all those ceremonies of devotion prescribed by the Koran to the other sex. To dwell upon the innumerable evils that arise from this invidious and unjust distinction of the sexes,

would require several pages; but, in order to fulfil the object of this communication, it may be sufficient to observe, that the females of Barbary are considered by their merciless keepers as little above the brute creation; and, while subjected to such melancholy degradation, can neither aspire to a more dignified place in society, nor entertain that sense of moral obligation which is so necessary to human happiness in this world.

It is said that the character of men, however depraved, is seldom destitute of some shades of virtue; if there can be an exception to this rule, it may, I think, with great justice, be applied to the people of Tripoly; for I have been unable to discover any of their good qualities that can be put in contrast with their well-known attributes of revenge, avarice, treachery, and deceit, which predominate indiscriminately in the prince and peasant. There is probably no country on earth where the inhabitants are more inclined to be vicious; yet such is the promptitude with which justice is administered, that crimes bear but a small proportion to those of European countries. —The prejudice generally entertained against strangers ought, however, to place them on their guard against the chicanery and low cunning of these people, who often succeed in duping Christians: in fact, there is no species of artifice which a Moor will not practise to attain his object; no lies or imposture to which he has not recourse, when dealing with foreigners. Menaces and

threats are sometimes resorted to by the higher order of society; while the Arabs pride themselves on imposing quietly on your credulity. Of the former practice, his highness the Bashaw's conduct, both to his own subjects and Europeans, furnishes many a memorable proof.

Bravery is said by many to be inherent in the Moorish character; if they possess any praiseworthy quality, I confess a little credit may be given to them on this point; but then, we are to consider the sort of enemies they have had to contend with. It is true they have beaten the Americans and Sicilians; but neither of these powers can be considered so eminent in war, as to enable us to form a just criterion of the nation who beats them in the field or on the water. Predestination, the universal belief of Mahonietans, is the sole cause of their occasional firmness in battle: in fact, every occurrence in life is attributed to that will of Heaven; and if an implicit faith in this doctrine renders them braver on the one hand, it ought to be observed, that, on the other, it tends to harden them in crimes of the blackest nature, which, owing to the fatal idea of having been the will of God, are never followed by remorse or amendment.

You will naturally inquire, why so much depravity should prevail here? The question is answered with facility: it originates in that cruel and despotic form of government which never fails to vitiate the people; and, by destroying the seeds

of rational liberty, annihilates, as it were, virtue, the legitimate offspring and soul of freedom!

Although no regular system of public education is established here, yet there are a great many schools about the city, where the poorest inhabitants generally contrive to have their male children taught to read and write: the mode of conveying instruction is, I understand, extremely ingenious, and well calculated for rapid improvement; the pupils are, however, taken away from their studies at the age of fourteen, and conclude their education by a mixture in society, and personal intercourse with men and manners.

Notwithstanding the Prophet's ordinances relative to a temperate mode of living, many of his followers have considerably degenerated in that respect; and it is not unusual for the Tripolines to indulge very frequently in the use of strong liquors, particularly rum and brandy. This is always done by stealth, while their native hypocrisy enables them to assume an appearance of moderation: their sensual appetites are, however, infinitely better regulated than those of any other people on the coast of Barbary, and a native of Tripoly is seldom known to have more than one wife out of the four allowed by his religion; and it is singular, that the indulgence of a certain propensity, so degrading to the Tunisians, is scarcely known here. I ought to add, in honour to the Bashaw's character, that he punishes that dreadful crime in a most exemplary manner.

The shocking life prescribed to the unhappy women of this country, renders it impossible for any European observer to form a distinct idea of their disposition and character. I have made very diligent inquiries as to their general method of treatment from their relentless masters; and also understand that, in point of personal beauty, they are by no means deficient, although that is much checked by their sedentary mode of life. Their education consists of acquiring a perfect knowledge of housekeeping, particularly that of making all their own clothes, and preparing cuscasoo, the favourite dish of Mahometans, and various sweetmeats, in the composition of which the women throughout Barbary are known to excel. As in other Mahometan countries, corpulency, in both men and women, is considered as the great criterion of beauty. There is little doubt, but that these unfortunate beings are feelingly alive to the miseries of their present forlorn situation, and would most joyfully hail any change which might give them a proper rank in society. In the streets, when permitted to go out, they are observed to gaze with admiration on Christians, and often heard to exclaim in terms of warm approbation of our dress and general appearance. Some people have asserted, that the force of habit, and long established custom, have extinguished those feelings of jealousy which would otherwise render the situations of rival brides so wretched. This is by no means the case; and, as if purely originating in

instinct (of which there can be no doubt,) the women of this country are continually torn by the same paroxysms of disappointed love as distract the most refined countries of Europe. The advocates, if there are any, for a plurality of wives, have only to visit Barbary, in order to be convinced of the ruin attached to, and the irrationality of, that fallacious system; for the most violent means are continually resorted to for the suppression of that offspring which it is out of their power to support, while the liberty of shutting up several ill-fated females, for the gratification of one person, is not only destructive of personal happiness and social order, but often fatal to thousands of a sex, which, if permitted to assume the rights of nature, *or their natural right*, would tend at once to charm and humanize their savage companions.

Although cruelty forms a striking characteristic of the Tripolines, that quality is not indulged so much in their administration of justice and punishments as people are led to suppose; indeed, the criminal code, if it can be honoured with that title, is comparatively lenient, when compared with that of Tunis or Algiers. Capital punishments are by no means frequent; they are never inflicted except in cases of murder, crimes against the government, or adultery on the part of females.

If, as Beccaria observes, the object of punishing the guilty should be rather that of deterring others than inflicting unnecessary torture, the laws of Tripoly deserve to be applauded in this

particular. The amazing promptness with which delinquency of every kind is punished here, has also often excited the admiration of Europeans. An individual is no sooner detected in the commission of any crime, than he is seized, and instantly brought to the Kaya, who investigates the alleged charges upon evidence; and, if it is a point of difficulty, refers the matter to his highness the Bashaw, otherwise immediate punishment follows conviction. The above-named officer sits and hears causes for a certain number of hours every day. The Bashaw also presides in his Hall of Justice according to the pressure of business and number of causes to be tried; every man pleads his own cause; and the meanest subject, when called upon to defend himself, is permitted to speak with a degree of freedom which would shock the feelings of an European sovereign.

The bastinado is usually inflicted, from one hundred to a thousand stripes, for all minor crimes; and imprisonments seldom exceed two or three months, so that no man's labour is lost to the community. Thefts are punished in a very exemplary and curious manner; the malefactor's right hand and left foot are taken off,* and suspended

* A most singular circumstance happened here about two years ago:—after one of these operations, the person who had been hired to perform it felt a degree of insensibility in the opposite limbs to those he had cut off, and in a few days totally lost the use of them, which he has not recovered to this day.

for several days in a place of public resort. Executions are not allowed to be performed by Mahometans; but a sufficient number of Jews are generally obliged by the Moorish soldiers to perform those offices: they are done in a way peculiar to this country; for the culprit being conveyed to the side of a high wall, a rope is fastened round his neck, and thrown over to the other side, where the Jews are in readiness, when they seize it and run the criminal up without seeing him. Strangling is never inflicted in public; that method of execution is reserved for the disaffected and those who excite the Bashaw's hatred.

The people of this country are remarkably superstitious in many respects, this is the inseparable evil of ignorance in every part of the world, and I do not see that its effects in Barbary are more to be deplored than they are any where else.

The sanctity attributed to ideots is certainly one of the most extraordinary dogmata connected with Mahometan belief, and serves to show the wonderful influence of religion when its tenets are even in opposition to the most self-evident truths. The only reason given for this truly singular predilection is that, being deprived of free will, "God had made them so, and they were entitled to the veneration of mortals." These objects of Mahometan devotion are generally seen under some arch leading into the city, and are very often supposed to assume the appearance of fools for some sinister purposes of their own. Their graves, like those of

the priests, are regarded as sanctuaries, from whence a criminal, if he takes refuge in them, though he may be starved, must not be forcibly removed. Mahomet seems to have duly appreciated the inutility of those numerous festivals and holidays, which are so ruinous to public industry in some places; those prescribed by the Koran occupy but a very small portion of the year, and never interrupt the occupations of trade or commerce for an hour. Ramadan is the Lent of Barbary, and lasts thirty days; during this period no follower of the Prophet is, upon pain of death, allowed to take the least refreshment whatsoever between sun rise and its setting. This fast is most rigidly observed and succeeded by what they call Biram; like our Easter, it lasts three days, which are of course devoted to unlimited festivity, of which eating and drinking form by far the greatest part. On this occasion, those who can afford it, kill a sheep, which is roasted whole, and when stuffed with sweetmeats of various kinds is considered by the Tripolines as the ne plus ultra of the culinary art. Biram is also enlivened by several Moorish sports, such as dancing girls, whose movements are like those described by the Abbé Raynal,* naked wrestlers whose bodies are rubbed over with soap

* The Baladières,—"ces danses sont presque toutes de pantomimes d'amour; le plan, le dessein, les attitudes, les mesures, les sons et les cadences de ces ballets, tout respire cette passion et en exprime les voluptés et les fureurs."—*Hist. du Commerce de deux Indes.*

and oil, walkers on stilts twenty feet high, musicians, and the whirligig used in English fairs, which is, I believe, a Moorish invention.

The existence of elves or fairies, who are supposed to inhabit under ground, and influence the destinies of mortals, is implicitly believed by the Moors; many even imagine that they are betrothed in marriage to these airy beings: a Moorish woman never throws any warm water on the ground without previously ejaculating, "I mean no harm to you, therefore do none to me." A wonderful degree of importance is attached to what they call the evil eye, a species of superstition that is entertained by all classes of the community: persons, animals, houses, in short, every article of furniture is furnished with a charm to counteract its effects; this usually consists in a small hand being painted on what they wish to preserve, and the silver bracelets worn by the woman have two triangles intersecting each other at right angles, carved on them. Horses, mules, and camels have also a charm suspended round their necks. Hands and triangles are painted over the entrances to the Bashaw's castle, those of the mosques, and all the private houses; the cradles of children are also ornamented with the figure of a hand. The following story was told to me by a Moor in order to illustrate the effect sometimes produced by an "evil eye." A person possessed of the evil eye, being once on a journey, chanced to enter a cottage where he saw an old woman, and a child which lay sleeping in a

cradle; he requested that some milk might be given him to quench his thirst, but there was unfortunately none in the house; having remained some time to repose himself, he was observed to gaze stedfastly on the infant, and admired its beauty, he soon after departed; on the mother's awaking next morning, she found her child dead! occasioned of course by the evil eye of the preceding day. Innumerable stories of a similar description are related in all the Catholic countries of Europe, where popular errors of this sort are carried infinitely further than in Barbary; as a proof of this assertion, it is only necessary to observe that the existence of ghosts or hobgoblins is entirely disbelieved in this country.

An extraordinary respect is always paid to the dead in Tripoly, and the friends of the deceased make a rule of visiting their tombs periodically, for the purpose of giving way to their feelings of sorrow; a trait which, in the character of such a people, cannot be too highly praised, as it exhibits a degree of sympathy not very common to christians. The general burying ground is situated outside the city gates. In the centre of this cemetery stands the mausoleum of a most celebrated Corsair, Rais Dragut, whose personal bravery and intrepidity equalled either of the Barbarossas, of one of whom he was the élève. This extraordinary character was born in Natolia, and remarkable for the traits of humanity which sometimes adorned his actions. He was Viceroy of Tripoly, and in 1565

proceeded to Malta with a large force for the purpose of assisting Piale, the Turkish General employed in the second armada against that island; a stone splinter, produced by a shot from the castle of St. Angelo, put a period to Dragut's existence, shortly after his landing. He was succeeded here by a much less memorable character named Ochali. It ought to be added, that Dragut entertained as much implacable hatred for the name of a Maltese Knight, as his successor, Usef Bashaw, does for a Maltese trader. Such is the veneration in which Dragut Rais's memory is held here, that the captains of his Highness's cruizers, previously to their sailing from Tripoly, proceed, accompanied by their officers and crew, to his tomb, and formally implore his protection during the ensuing expedition. There is a small one nearer the town, at which every corpse going to be deposited in the other is delayed for a short time, in order that a prayer may be said according to an old custom. The Bashaw's family, and bodies of saints are exclusively permitted to be buried in the city. His Highness's family mausoleum is close to the grand mosque, in the vicinity of his palace.

The christian place of burial is, of course, outside the town-walls, and close to the sea; it is never molested by the Moors, who, as already stated, treat all our religious ceremonies with the utmost respect.

The marriage ceremonies of these people are invariably performed in the night, and attended with

considerable gaiety. The bride is conveyed to the bridegroom's place of residence by her parents and friends, preceded by a band of men bearing lanterns and playing on tabors; these are followed by slaves carrying baskets of Henna, and various perfumes, together with the jewels and night robes of the bride, who is also preceded by a slave, who walking backwards, presents a looking glass towards her; a number of women are always in the train, and contrive to make a great noise till the procession arrives at its destination, when feasting, music, and dancing continue till midnight, at which period the company retire. The Tripoline women are often married when under twelve years of age. If the bride is an Arab, and has any considerable distance to go, she is placed in a wicker cradle, borne by a camel, and attended by several men on horseback, who as they proceed, keep up a continued fire of musketry, and perform various feats of horsemanship in honour of the lady.

The bond of matrimonial union is formed by the bridegroom's signing articles in the Cadi's presence; this generally relates to her dowry, which he is obliged by law to return, if on any future occasion he should be disposed to repudiate her.

Children during the first year are wrapt tightly round, from head to foot, with swaddling clothes, as the Moors tell you, to prevent any injury being done to their limbs.—"And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in *swaddling clothes* lying in a manger."—St. Luke, c. ii. v. 12.

Stabbing with a knife is the usual result of a serious dispute between the Turkish or Moorish soldiers and sailors, and also between them and the women of the town. Civilians gratify their private resentment against each other, by administering poison in a cup of coffee; the latter has indeed become so common now, that when any person goes off suddenly, people say, "He has taken his coffee." The poisoned coffee is sometimes given with a view of producing immediate dissolution, and at others, in order to prolong the victim's miseries for several months.

The peculiarities which distinguish the people of different nations have often surprized me. In this place it is usual for the lower class of people, particularly sailors and soldiers, when in the company of Cyprians, of whom there are a few in the capital, to show their apparent insensibility to pain, by the application of fire to different parts of the body, they also often suffer those ladies to run a knife into their arms and legs; those who evince the greatest degree of firmness in such trials, are of course honoured with more confidence and esteem than the rest.

The sports and amusements practised here are of the most simple description. Athletic exercises, such as wrestling, are peculiar to the lower class; those of a higher condition are devoted to a life of indolence in general. Gambling is a vice almost unknown, although chess and a game called mangolo, occupy a considerable portion of those

who frequent coffee-houses: in their quarrels with each other, they seldom have recourse to blows; a violent dispute usually finishes every disagreement. The Jews are extremely litigious amongst themselves, but neither distinguished for their activity or bravery.

The costume of Tripoly, whether for men or women, differs in no way from that of Tunis and the other parts of Barbary. The Arabs wear a sort of brown baracan and turban; the former is thrown carelessly over the body, and by being pinned on the left shoulder, has a very graceful appearance. As all are obliged by law to yield military service to the Bashaw, so every man in the regency is armed: the weapons consist of a sword, called tagena, case of pistols and dagger; when on horseback, a musket is added.

The sciences and liberal arts being quite unknown to these people, they possess a large share of that self-opinion which is the never-failing companion of ignorance; and not only despise our improvements, but are so foolish as to believe themselves our superiors in several respects. This erroneous mode of thinking, together with their natural jealousy of character, is naturally a great bar to advancement: but another obstacle, still more powerful, is put in their way; this comes from the head of the government, who is well convinced, that if he encouraged a spirit of inquiry and improvement, the numerous impositions and cruelties, which enable him to govern now, would

speedily be exploded. The Bashaw, therefore, rejects every thing in the shape of foreign invention, and promulgates a belief that it would be contrary to the Prophet's will, if the people adopted the modes of other nations. As to their literature, it is confined to a knowledge of the Koran, and a few eastern tales, beyond which they never aspire. The arts of design and perspective, together with every other species of refinement, except what is absolutely necessary for the simplest wants of nature, are unknown. Medicine and surgery are the only sciences which they have brought to what they consider a degree of the highest perfection; something relative to the method of curing diseases will, therefore, very properly come in here.

The number of physicians throughout the regency is not equal to what we have in the London hospital; and such is the uninterrupted health enjoyed by all classes of the community, that these have but little practice. Their fees seldom exceed sixpence; even operations are performed for a shilling!—Nothing is internally administered to patients except herbs of different kinds; regimen is the great resource during sickness. The surgical instruments would doubtless excite the curiosity of our faculty; they consist of a few irons of different sizes, with figures marked on the ends: these are applied to various parts of of the body, as the nature of diseases require; their miraculous effect, in many instances that

have come within my own observation, furnishes a most interesting ground of speculative inquiry as to the effects of fire and heat on the human system. However incredible the assertion may appear, I have, during my intercourse with Tunis and this place, known several attacks of rheumatism to be removed by the application of these irons, and one case, in which a person suffering from the effects of rupture received the greatest relief. The instrument is usually applied behind one of the ears, and often under the ancles: wounds are generally burnt out by them, and ulcers of a serious nature are frequently cured. Ludicrous as this relation of Barbary operations may appear to the host of empirics who swarm on our shore, there is no person who has closely observed things in this country who will not bear testimony to the truth of what I have advanced. There are no public hospitals; and cripples, or people of a deformed appearance, are never seen in public.

Broken bones and fractures are very successfully treated in general; the ostrich grease is universally applied to them and contusions of every description: amputations are performed with amazing celerity; the arteries are not taken up as in Europe; and a limb is no sooner taken off, than the stump is dipped into a bowl of hot pitch, which generally stops the bleeding, and soon brings about a cure. In fact, when we reflect on the simplicity of treating diseases in this almost savage

country, compared with the innumerable medical impositions peculiar to our own, it is impossible not to deplore the progress of refinement; which, if it has raised us above other people in so many ways, has also created a number of imaginary evils unknown to a less civilized state of society.

The language spoken here is supposed, by European adepts, to be the purest Arabic known on the whole coast of Barbary: the Tripolines consider it as infinitely superior to that of their Tunisian neighbours. If we are to believe the opinion of some people, there is scarcely any dialect in which a more harmonious combination of sounds can be produced; and it would appear that many quaint sayings, habitual in our own country, have been practised here time out of mind. Thus, if you relate any thing to an Arab which savours of the marvellous, he very drily exclaims with a "hum."—Lym Portugal!—Very fine oranges!" a phrase once very much in vogue among our Bond-street loungers. When people meet in the street, the usual salute of "How do you do" is exchanged; they generally say, "Ash lunck?"—What's the colour?—as we inquire on similar occasions, "How does the land lay," &c.—It is remarkable with what a degree of facility and precision an Arab can learn English, whereas one of our countrymen rarely attains any perfection in the Arabic: the French are more successful.

In closing this imperfect sketch of Tripoline manners and customs, one observation appears to

suggest itself. It has with great justice been said, that happiness is comparative, and moreover, that the all-wise Providence has distributed its favours in nearly equal proportions all over the habitable globe. In calmly contemplating the characters of these people, we cannot but deplore that habitual system of wickedness which has vitiated them, and made them what they are. It will, however, be recollected, that all their evils spring from the corruptions of an improper, not to say vile, government; and that the people, who are now degraded by every species of vice, would, under a free and enlightened code of laws, equal the most improved class of society in other countries. Situated as they are, we may well exclaim with the poet—

"—Where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise—"

for a greater extension of knowledge, or more refined degree of sensibility, might tend to embitter their situation, without ameliorating their civil and political condition. Impartiality requires that I should pursue this reflection a little further, and observe, that if philosophy and science have not reared their head amidst these deserts, the people are also strangers to that innumerable and melancholy train of woes, which have followed the steps of refinement in many countries of Europe; and that in the enjoyment of a salubrious climate, and wonderfully productive soil, the na-

tives of Tripoly are truly blest. Their wants are few, and most liberally supplied by the beneficent hand of Nature. It is true they are deprived of the gratification we derive from balls, plays, and routs; yet, on the other hand, the streets of Tripoly are not crowded with objects of degrading mendicity. There are no hospitals or poor-houses; for every body is usefully employed. You see no jails filled with malefactors and debtors.* The towns are not frequented by thousands of unhappy females, driven to a life of dissoluteness and dishonour by necessity: and the fatal arts of seduction never destroy the peace of an unsuspecting family. This picture, sombre as it is, of comparative happiness and misery, might be extended; but I willingly leave it to the reflection of my reader; and in revering the dispensations of Heaven, which has, with so much impartiality, divided the cup of good and evil below, shall proceed to fulfil the ulterior object in my next letter, by a description of the government, and political relations of this state.

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* There is no such thing as arrest for debt here, much less imprisonment: if a man chooses to lend any thing he may, but cannot throw you into a jail, and thereby annihilate your means of repaying him. However, the obligation of buying is reversed in this country; for it is the seller who thinks he confers a favour on you by disposing his property of which you are in need.

LETTER IV.

" Ils ne regrettent point la perte
De ces arts, dont la découverte
A l'homme a couté tant de soins,
Et qui, devenus nécessaires,
N'ont fait qu' augmenter nos misères
En multipliant nos besoins."

Huron de Rousseau.

History of Tripoly—Carthaginians—Romans—Saracens—British Attacks and Treaties—Government—Characters and Descriptions of the various Officers—Tripoline Policy towards the Arabs—British Connection with that Government.

Tripoly, 1811.

A LENGTHENED detail of the former history of this country would be foreign to my original purpose, and owing to a scantiness of materials neither calculated to instruct or amuse you. More anxious to illustrate the present state of things than dwell upon the past, it will perhaps be sufficient merely to observe, that the coasts of Tripoly were ever objects of solicitude with the two great rival powers of antiquity. Sharing the glory and fate of Carthage, it became a most valuable acquisition to the Roman empire, and after having for many centuries experienced the benign effects of enlightened laws and good government, it sunk

into that night of obscurity which overwhelmed the former mistress of the world—a darkness from whence it has not emerged for a period of more than one thousand years. The triumphant followers of Mahomet, under the Caliphs, subjugated the whole of this coast, in their way to Spain, during the seventh century, and obliterated, by the introduction of a new religion, nearly every trace of its former manners and customs. Since the above period, Tripoly, like the other states of Barbary, has been continually either a prey to despotism, or torn by intestine division. This city was occupied for a short time by the Knights of Malta, in the reign of Charles V. of Spain; they were, however, driven from it in 1551, by Sinan Bashaw and the celebrated Dragut Rais, since which period, no European power has attempted to take possession of any part of the coast. It has, however, been necessary to send a British admiral and respectable naval force, more than once, to bring these people to a proper sense of duty, and repress their disposition to plunder on the high seas. Blake,* the Nelson of his day,

* It generally happens, that more than a century passes before the place of such an admiral is supplied: and on comparing their respective characters, it is impossible not to be struck with the similarity between this great man and Lord Nelson.

The following panegyric of an elegant writer, the Earl of Clarendon, on Blake, cannot be too often repeated or read by the naval men of Great Britain:—"He was the first man that declined the

and glory of England, after his successful attack on Tunis in 1665, came here and concluded a treaty which appeared to secure the British interests on a tolerably stable foundation. With the states of Barbary there is, however, no faith, and in 1675 their outrages became so frequent, that it was resolved to send Sir John Narborough with a squadron of ships, to punish them for frequent breaches of the treaty made by Admiral Blake. The gallant and prompt manner in which the boats of his ships, under the direction of Lieutenant Shovel,* made a most successful attack on several men of war in the harbour, by which

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old track, and made it manifest, that the science might be attained in less time than was imagined, and despised those rules which had been long in practice, *to keep his ship and men out of danger*, which had been held in former times a point of great ability and circumspection, as if the principal art requisite in the captain of a ship had been to be sure to come home safe again. He was the first man who brought the ships to contemn castles on shore, which had been thought ever very formidable, and were discovered by him to make a noise only, and to fright those who could be rarely hurt by them. He was the first that infused that proportion of courage into seamen, by making them see, by experience, what mighty things they could do if they were resolved; and taught them to fight in fire as well as upon water: and although he hath been well imitated and followed, he was the first that gave the example of that kind of naval courage, and bold and resolute achievements." It would appear that his lordship had been writing the character of our hero of Trafalgar.

* Afterwards Sir Cloudesly, who was shipwrecked on the Island of Scilly in 1797.— *Campbell's Lives of the Admirals.*

four were totally destroyed, is recorded in our naval history, together with the subsequent exploits which obliged the Tripolines to accede to Sir John's terms. These were the most memorable instances of Great Britain's hostility against Tripoly. Several commanders have been here since that time, but all contrived to renew the treaties, without making that sort of impression upon them which an exertion of force alone can produce.

In pourtraying the government of Tripoly, I regret that it has not fallen to my lot to describe a more enlightened and beneficent system of legislative power; on the contrary, the most unequivocal despotism prevails throughout every department of the state, and, as already observed, has moulded the people into a degree of insensibility, from whence it is a very doubtful question whether they will ever arise, till awakened by the arm of conquest, or a more extensive intercourse with the powers of Europe, which would ultimately have the effect of removing those prejudices, engendered as much by ignorance as the baleful impression of religious dogmata. Passing over a long period, during which the Regency was subjected to the immediate sovereignty of the Porte, I find that through the talents and military prowess of Hamet Bashaw, a native of Caramania, it was in 1713 erected into a kingdom, at which time Hamet not only disowned the Grand Seignior's authority, but carried his arms into the interior, where he succeeded in making the Sultanny of

Fezzan tributary, and reduced the hitherto untractable inhabitants of Garian and Messulata, to the utmost subjection.* He also possessed the merit of having encouraged ingenious foreigners to settle in his dominions, and thereby promoted the cultivation of many sources of national wealth, particularly the manufactory of woollen stuffs, tanning Morocco leather, &c. Yet although Hamet Bashaw made Tripoly independent of the Grand Seignior in a great measure, still for form's sake, his successors, on coming into power, make large presents, which are followed up in the course of their reign by others, for which they receive a Firman to act.

After the death of this prince, which took place in 1745, the usual dissensions, about who was to succeed him in the government, continued to distract the Regency for many years, although he fixed it as hereditary in his own family, and was succeeded by his second son Hamet, of whom the present ruler Yusef is a lineal descendant, and said to be infinitely more cruel than his father Ali, who is known to have put to death seven of his nearest relations. Yusef, taking advantage of the weakness and incapacity of his elder brother, Hasan, contrived to get into power in the year

* The name of Sheik Safanassa, an Arab chief in the mountains of Garian, will be long remembered in Tripoly, for the successful opposition he had made to the Bashaw, for a long series of years.

1795, at which time, an usurper, Ali Banzool, from Constantinople, was driven from this city, after being in possession of it for two years, and having resisted every effort of the Bashaw's to supplant him. The rightful heir to this government is said to have fallen a victim by the hands of his own brother, who could not have governed under any other circumstances. Yusef's character presents an odious assemblage of all those qualities which generally distinguish a prince of this country: nor is there a hope of his future amendment; for, educated in crimes, he is the settled slave of passion; hence these innumerable acts of violence committed daily by the Tripoline cruizers, and by all those in subordinate situations who surround his person. Those who have more minutely studied his character, assert that it bears a greater resemblance to that of Domitian than Nero, being more delighted with perpetrating acts of severity with his own hands than seeing others perform them;* and, like the former, he never entertained a real friendship for any man, however liberal his professions may have been.

There are in this country, as under the most regular forms of government, officers of state who are in situations of considerable responsibility: of

* His Highness on a late occasion, when in one of those paroxysms to which he is so frequently subject, struck off the head of a poor Sicilian slave, named Michele Scotta, with his own hand.

these I shall shortly notice the principal, together with their respective functions.

The Bashaw's eldest son, Mahomet, has the title of Bey, and usually commands all the land forces of the Regency as generalissimo.

The Aga commands all the Turkish soldiers in the Bashaw's pay, who do not at present exceed one hundred men. During the Bey's absence, this officer is intrusted with the command of the army. There are several Agas under him, who act as aides-du-camp.

The Kaya is grand judge; he presides all day, except from twelve till three, at the castle gate; and is the first in dignity and power in civil matters; all complaints of injustice or oppression are represented through him to the Bashaw; who, on the other hand, makes this officer the organ through whom all punishments are inflicted, for crimes of state, disobedience to the laws, and all other transgressions. The Kaya, by his Highness's permission, adjusts and mediates all differences between the government and Arabs. His situation is naturally very lucrative, but he is obliged to reimburse a large proportion of the profits to his master. The promptitude with which causes of the most intricate nature are decided, and offences punished, is truly admirable; and it is impossible for an European to witness the almost instantaneous course of justice in Barbary, without contrasting it with the "law's delay" peculiar to other countries. Here are, I confess,

frequent acts of oppression and injustice; neither can you expect to see that equity of decision which marks the character of our English tribunals. Yet the people are ignorant of the immense expense, vexation, and disappointment, which so generally attend suits of law in other places; nor is there that incentive to litigation which a useless multiplicity of lawyers never fail to create. For the justice of this remark, I will only appeal to the state of your own island, and more particularly to that of Sicily.

The Hasnadar Grande, or grand treasurer, is receiver and paymaster of the Bashaw's public money. The present Bashaw is his own treasurer; the nominal one has the charge and command of the unfortunate Sicilian slaves, one hundred and fifty in number.

The Hasnadar Piccolo, or treasurer of the household, is paymaster of the Bashaw's private expenses in the castle and city.

The Kaya Piccolo is a species of high sheriff, and comptroller of executions within the castle, commander of the body guard, and in the Kaya Grande's absence administers his functions.

The Sheik el Bled is a species of lord mayor; he keeps order, and administers the city laws as prescribed to him by the Bashaw, to whom he makes daily reports of his proceedings.

The Mufti is at the head of the Maraboot order; not unlike, componere magnis, our Archbishop of Canterbury.

Kadi is chief judge in transgressions against the Mahometan faith. The Mufti and Kadi assist his Highness the Bashaw on the days of distributing justice in full divan, both in civil and religious matters.

The Kaids are governors of the respective tribes and provinces in his Highness's dominions, and are endowed with almost unlimited powers; they administer justice, levy taxes, and extort tributes from the Arabs; their cruelty and rapacity are proverbial.

Haggias are the Bashaw's private secretaries, of whom he generally has two or three.

The foregoing, together with those who have been employed as foreign embassadors, principally naval and military officers; and five favorite persons of Tripoly, form the Divan: the original intention of this assembly was to regulate all matters of public interest, whether of a civil or political nature; but it is now merely nominal, and only assembled on days of ceremony to give external eclat to his Highness's audiences, &c., for the Bashaw has taken care that all the power should emanate from himself.

There are a number of subordinate officers, indiscriminately termed Chaouxes: these are persons of approved *fidelity*, and not only execute all the internal edicts of the Bashaw, but perform the office of couriers in and out of the Regency.

All the officers of government, whether civil or military, are, of course, appointed by his High-

ness, and their continuance in office made to depend entirely on his will and caprice; he has also the power of inflicting the most exemplary punishment for all their real or imaginary crimes. It is to this unlimited authority, as ruinous to the prince as to his people, that we may justly attribute the frequent revolutions in Barbary, and those scenes of assassination and crime which excite so much horror in the minds of Europeans. Without a shadow of virtue, and proverbially ignorant, a prince, in this country, becomes completely the slave of his passions; and in gratifying all the worst propensities of human nature, renders those under him equally vicious with himself: for the force of example is irresistible; and men seldom want a very powerful stimulus to evil.

Yusef's family consists of three wives: one white, styled the Padrona Grande; and two black ones. By the former there are five children living, three males and two females:—viz. 1st, Mahomet, twenty-three years of age, married to his cousin, a daughter of the dethroned Hamet, by whom he has three boys;—2nd, Hamet, seventeen years of age;—3rd, Ali, sixteen years old;—4th, Cadoogah, married to Selim, the Hasnadar, without issue;—5th, Fatima, betrothed to Mustapha, the Rais of Marine, or Captain of the Port. By the black women, who were formerly his Highness's slaves, he has three boys and three girls. It ought to be observed, that the Bashaw's family would have been infinitely more

numerous if he had not encouraged his wives to evade their accouchements, which is not considered as a criminal act amongst the Mahometans in general.

In describing the characters of those who fill the offices of government in Tripoly, little pleasure is afforded either to the biographer or reader, as instead of virtue and talent nothing but a set of men, actuated by the worst principles, and most degrading crimes, can be brought to view. Amongst these, Sidi Hamet, first minister, a name well known in Tripoly, and universally execrated, stands foremost. Lord Nelson duly appreciated the character and views of this man, at that time Raïs of Marine, or Captain of the Port; his Lordship's extensive political sagacity enabled him to perceive the many mischiefs which arise to Great Britain from a temporizing policy with the Barbary States, and knowing Sidi Hamet to be, not only an enemy of ours, but a warm partizan of France, with his accustomed magnanimity, sent a line of battle ship here, in 1798, requiring positively that the Bashaw should for ever remove from his councils so dangerous a subject "alike the enemy of his Highness and of Great Britain." A promise of compliance was immediately given; but, as usual, broken; and Sidi was not even removed from his post, but continued in the enjoyment of it, to the great detriment of British subjects, until 1809, when he was promoted to the appointment of minister for foreign affairs. In

May, 1810, in order to answer some sinister views of the Bashaw, he was sent on an embassy to General Oakes at Malta. His attachment to France has naturally increased since the request of our ever-to-be-lamented admiral. I have seen a copy of the letter written by his Lordship on the above occasion; his habitual greatness of mind is manifested in every line of it; and, as a document, calculated to produce a decisive effect upon those to whom it was addressed, it is a model of composition.* That truly great man was not only unparalleled as an admiral, but a most able diplomatist; and I fear ages will pass by before we ever see his like again. To sum up the character of Sidi Hamet, it may justly be said of him, that he is an exact epitome of the Moorish character, and a man upon whose professions of friendship we can never place the smallest reliance: he was succeeded in his former situation by Mustapha, a

* In one part of it his Lordship says, "Your Highness will, without difficulty, write me a letter, the substance of which will be dictated by Mr. Consul Lucas; you will also, as a convincing proof of your detestation of the evil councils which have been given you by Hamet Rais, your Captain of the Port, either cause him to be delivered to Commodore Campbell, that I may send him to Constantinople, or you will dispose of him in such a manner that he may for ever be incapable of giving your Highness further advice, for his heart is so black, that I am convinced he can do you no good." The above is quite enough to prove that great man's presence of mind and political talent. In another place he adds, "I never could have believed that a Mussulman could have told a lie."

Georgian slave, whose chief claims to merit are derived from the low cunning and sycophancy which mark the character of his country, and are his predominant features. Mustapha is the worthy slave of Sidi Hamet, who purchased him, together with another named Selim, when once on a mission at Constantinople. How he has crept into the Bashaw's confidence, I have not been able to learn; and only know, that he has used several subjects of his Britannic Majesty extremely ill, by striking several, and, as in a late instance, threatening to shoot the master of a Maltese vessel. His situation, Captain of the Port, is considered the third post of importance in the Regency, and also gives him the entire superintendence of the customs. I have already observed that this man is promised one of the Bashaw's daughters (Fatima) in marriage; which, if realized, will make him a still greater object of jealousy on our part. His unpopularity equals that of Sidi Hamet.

The Kaya, or grand judge, is a man of commanding appearance, fifty years old; and, I am happy to say, an honorable exception to the rest of his colleagues. Although a Russian renegado he has had the singular good fortune to acquire the unlimited confidence of his master, who gave him one of his sisters in marriage; this man has the rare felicity, amongst public men, of being universally respected, which shews that virtue meets its reward, even amidst savages!

Abraham Serusi, it is scarcely necessary to say, is a Jew; he is secretary to his Highness, and possesses talents which render him particularly useful. Abraham's virtues, if he has any, are of the negative kind: money is the god of his adoration; and having formerly been a French broker, he is, of course, decidedly in the interest of that nation.

Selim, the Hasnadar Grande, the friend of Mustapha, and bought with him by Sidi Hamet, has also had the good fortune to attract the Bashaw's notice, though without either talents or integrity, and has received the hand of one of his daughters, besides a most lucrative place.

Hadgi Massar, although in the marine department, is employed by the Bashaw in all matters wherein an extraordinary degree of duplicity and cunning is necessary; the success of his mission to Malta proves that Hadgi is not a novice at negotiation: with all his defects I am led to believe that his political principles are rather in favour of England.

Hamet, at present embassador to Spain, is not destitute of some talent; he was many years dragoman of the Dutch consulate here, and speaks the Italian language particularly well.

Amongst the naval men of Tripoly there are some odd characters. Murat Rais, amidst others, is a living proof that, by perseverance and convenient pliability of disposition, men can sometimes attain the highest offices; this man is a native of Scotland, named Peter Lysle, and was, in the year

1794, mate of an English ship, which used to frequent this place: accused of plundering part of that vessel's cargo, he took refuge in the castle, and embracing the Mahometan faith, was soon advanced to a command in the Tripoline navy. Since that time he has often distinguished himself as a pirate, and made many valuable captures. Lysle has also been an instance of the instability of princely favor; for the Bashaw has in several instances spoliated him of the greatest part of his property, and although enjoying the empty title of first admiral, poor Peter is no longer an object of consideration with any party here; he is, in fact, rather one of commiseration, and is often known to sigh for the loss of his country and friends. Rais Shelly, the vice admiral, is a Tripoline Moor; he was taught navigation by Murat, and is one of the most celebrated pirates in the Mediterranean.

Amongst European residents at this place, the only one worth being particularly noticed, is Mr. Saverio Naudi, who would have remained in deserved obscurity, had not his conduct here, and at other places, made him a fit object of public animadversion and sorrow. He is now Charge d' affaires for the Americans in Tripoly, having been put into the situation by a late consul of that nation, and confirmed by the Bashaw, who has rejected another sent here to supply his place. Mr. Naudi's history is simply as follows. Having in the early part of his life, while pursuing the

trade of a watchmaker in Valetta, been concerned in the robbery of one of the churches, he was obliged to take refuge in Marseilles, from whence he was a second time driven away for a libel on the government of France, and various other acts of impropriety. Knowing this place to be the receptacle of evil, he came and contrived to obtain the Bashaw's confidence, by those acts of mean docility which generally gain over the ignorant. When once ingratiated with his Highness, he soon became a principal actor in the civil and political atrocities of Tripoly, and continues to play a most dangerous, as well as distinguished, part in them, till this day. Exiled from Malta he is the avowed enemy of the British interest here; and, independently of stimulating all the Bashaw's actions to his subjects, he is known to have been in a great measure the cause of our consul's confinement, together with that of Mr. M'Donogh. It is also positively asserted, that many of the piratical acts committed by the cruizers at sea, may be traced to Mr. Naudi's advice; in fact, he is execrated by all the inhabitants, and considered by every one here as the most dangerous subject in the Regency.

Many subordinate characters might be noticed, but as they are, without any exception, distinguished by the same qualities as those already stated, it would be superfluous, if not presumption, to exhaust your patience with a repetition of such deformity as must be exhibited by a more

extended account than what I have given. I shall therefore leave them, and turn to another subject, that of his Highness's policy towards his own subjects, after which an account will be given of his conduct to the different nations of Europe, particularly Great Britain; both calculated to prove the erroneousness of that system of policy which Great Britain has pursued towards Tripoly during the last fifty years.

It is a just cause of regret to all the people here, that his Highness's policy should be so inimical to the interests of his Arab subjects, who are, in fact, the whole source of his opulence. If instead of promoting disunion amongst the different tribes, he could be induced to fix them in the pursuits of agriculture, an immense quantity of corn might be raised in the Regency, and would soon become an important branch of commerce, highly favorable to Malta and Sicily. This unhappily is not the case, as it would appear that the Bashaw does not ever wish the Arabs to sow much wheat. I trust that in the event of his perseverance in such an impolitic system, some future prince of this country will have sense enough to pursue a different mode of acting.

The Bashaw's policy towards the wandering Arabs, who inhabit the provinces of Mesulata and Garian, is not a little calculated to illustrate his general system of politics. Each tribe forms a separate community, or, as they call it, *Adowar;* they are governed by a Sheik, who, in conjunc-

tion with some of the most experienced amongst them, discusses all matters relative to public interest; they bring to this place the articles already enumerated, and return with the usual commodities: as might be expected from people living almost in a state of nature, they have frequent quarrels amongst each other; these are ultimately referred to the Bashaw, who dispatches a body of cavalry to chastise one of the parties, when an indiscriminate massacre takes place, and his Highness exacts a poll tax on the number slain. Aware of the danger which might arise from suffering these poor and warlike people to become united, the respective Caids, or Governors of his Highness, have directions to excite them to gaming until they have recourse to arms, when a party of Turks are seasonably thrown in on the strongest side, to conquer the other; it is by means like the above, that his Highness's government is alone supported, for if these people were united, valuing themselves on that insatiable love of liberty peculiar to them, and naturally brave, they might with facility set the Bashaw at defiance. Their usual weapons are a gun, broad sword, case of pistols, and dagger; the long wooden lance barbed with iron is only peculiar to the inhabitants of the interior.

Although the chiefs of Barbary cannot maintain their authority without being surrounded by Turkish soldiers, yet the most marked jealousy is entertained of their conduct, and they are closely

watched; for being kidnapped in the Levant, it may naturally be supposed that necessity alone obliges them to remain in the service of Tripoly.*

Yusef possesses the "Punica fides" in great perfection. His policy to those who serve in the castle as domestics is truly illustrative of the Barbary Prince. Well aware of the pilfering disposition of those about him, particularly the Moors and negro slaves, he suffers the Christians to accumulate money, in order that they may look after the others, and argues in this way:—"My property if stolen by the Moors vanishes for ever, but in consequence of my apparent inattention to the plunder of the Christians, they watch my own subjects, and monopolizing all to themselves, are in a few years enabled to purchase their freedom; by which I am amply remunerated for former peculations."

The philosopher and statesman cannot but lament that, during the lapse of so many centuries, which has seen science and civilization extend over the countries of Europe, millions of their fellow creatures on this side the Mediterranean, equally susceptible of improvement with themselves, should still continue in all the barbarism of the dark ages: it is impossible not to feel a desire of ameliorating their condition; prejudices of

* In the foregoing method of governing the unfortunate Arabs, his Highness seems to give us a lesson upon the way we should treat the Barbary States as a collective body.

the most obstinate nature are, however, as yet opposed to those who would persuade them into a sense of their real interests; and while we may deplore their apathy and indifference to the adoption of our more rational customs, a regard to our own safety dictates, that a nation like Great Britain should not be subject to the piracies and attacks of a horde of lawless adventurers, who have for a long period imposed upon the passive credulity of nations. On the contrary, I am satisfied that independent of our great naval and military superiority in the immediate vicinity of his Highness's dominions, the circumstances of the British navy having, for many years, been the only barrier between him and the ambitious views of France, is more than sufficient to have established a powerful claim on his respect and friendship towards us. Uninfluenced by these considerations, it will be found, on inquiry, that the British merchant has repeatedly been an object of indiscriminate plunder by his Highness, and Englishmen exposed to unmerited insult: and all the acts of apparent friendship manifested towards our government, having their origin in motives of self-interest, it cannot be denied but that the mistaken policy we have hitherto adopted towards Tripoly, as well as all the Barbary powers, has, in a great measure, been the cause of these evils; but until a radical change is effected, our relations with them must ineyitably become daily worse than they are at present.

With respect to the foreign relations of his

Highness, they have undergone a great change, and one which is highly favourable to the great European powers. Since the French revolution, which has placed so many states under the dominion of France, so that Great Britain and that power are the only ones, whom it is his peculiar interest to conciliate, all the minor states, such as Sweden, Denmark, and several others, particularly the Americans, will ever be ob-objects of indiscriminate spoliation, until better able to assert their own dignity. The latter, while at war with the Bashaw, from 1800 to 1804, did not make any impression on this town, although on the other side of the Atlantic, they were designated as heroes. One of their frigates, the Philadelphia, was given up to the Tripolines, without any resistance or effort to get her off; and many got on shore without reach of cannot shot. She was commanded by a Captain Bainbridge, for whose ransom, together with his officers and crew, Jonathan had to pay 60,000 Spanish dollars. Their peace was brought about in 1804, through the agency of Mr. Nissen, the Danish consul, and concluded by Commodore Rogers and Mr. Lear, their consul-general. Theirscandalous abandonment of the Bashaw's brother, Sidi Hamet, on that occasion, has been justly reprobated by every one in this country.

Sidi Hamet, after he was driven from the government, was appointed to a command at Derne, from whence he was seduced by the fair promises of the Americans, then at war with the reigning

Bashaw. Their object was that of holding this man up as a bugbear to frighten his Highness into terms. These transatlantic heroes were, however, after various though ineffectual attempts, obliged to pay for a peace with Tripoly, and most shamefully abandoned poor Sidi Hamet to his fate, by only stipulating for his return to Derne, instead of allowing him a pension; he went there from necessity, but was soon obliged to fly from the vengeance of his brother, and is now, though the legitimate sovereign of the country, a wanderer in Egypt.

Neither Denmark, Sweden, Spain, or Portugal have for a long time paid their tribute regularly, a circumstance which has affected his Highness's revenues very materially, and often furnished him with pretexts to commit acts of violence for the purpose of being remunerated.

As to which of the belligerents his Highness may be most attached to, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to decide; for where self interest is the only impulse of human action, people cannot be supposed to entertain any stronger attachment for one party than another. An accession of wealth, no matter from what quarter it comes, is always most acceptable to the Bashaw, nor is its value diminished in his estimation, whether plundered from a British or French vessel: his anxiety never extends beyond the means of securing it for himself, to the exclusion of every other person, particularly the right owners.

This disposition to acquire riches, has given rise to some serious losses on the parts of several merchants in your island, few of whom have as yet been able to rescue their property from his Highness's grasp.

The want of support to our consuls, added to the extraordinary permission granted by ministers, for the Governor of Malta to enter into a direct correspondence with the Barbary chiefs, serves at once to demonstrate a deficiency of political wisdom, and ignorance of that sort of treatment which would alone forward our real interests on this side the Mediterranean. The importance of this truth cannot be too deeply impressed on the minds of the government, and requires to be more fully illustrated. All our consuls come out to this country with the title of "His Majesty's Agent and Consul-general;" and, from the established laws of nations, are of course, when no embassador is present, considered as the legal representative of the sovereign: it is precisely in this light that the chiefs of Barbary view them; they even suppose all those honoured with the appointment to be the most confidential friends about the King of England. In this belief it would be highly politic to encourage them, as it must create an additional degree of respect and attention to his demands; but when they are favoured with direct communications from any other quarter except that of the naval commander-in-chief, who can at any time enforce his demands, the consul is no longer

looked up to as a person of any importance, and is supposed to have forfeited the confidence of his government, when other people have been employed to write what should have come through him.

Any person in the least acquainted with the Moorish character must be aware, that their professions are never founded in sincerity; the uniform conduct of his Highness, who governs here, is an ample proof of this assertion; it is, therefore, incumbent on us to enforce our demands with that degree of dignity which becomes a great nation. The correspondence to which I have alluded, and farce of sending presents to the heads of departments in your island, has, to my certain knowledge, been particularly detrimental to the public service; for, at the very period of their being sent, the property of British merchants residing in Malta, was, and is still, detained here, although promised repeatedly to be restored. There is also another subject connected with the policy of his Highness, to which I would beg your attention. Whenever the correspondence between him and the Governor of Malta takes place, his answers are always accompanied by secret instructions to his agents there, to circulate the most unfavourable reports of our consul here, with a view of creating impressions injurious to his character, and causing a misunderstanding between him and the governor, by which the latter's attention has been drawn from the Bashaw's conduct to that of our consul. I

can assert, with truth, that this stratagem has but too often succeeded, and ought to be kept in mind by the future head of the government in Malta.

LETTER V.

" Nam fere maxima pars, morem
Hunc homines habent; quod si volunt,
Dum id impetrant, boni sunt: sed
Id ubi jam penes sese habent;
Ex bonis pessimi et fraudulentissimi
Sunt"—— *Plaut. in Captiv.* Act ii. Sc. i.

Recommendation of a spirited Line of Conduct on the various Subjects in the preceding Letter, as connected with Sicily, Malta, and the Levant—Piracies—State of Slavery—Finances—Military and Naval Force.

Tripoly, 1811.

THE defects in our policy, mentioned in my last, is well known to all the courts of Europe, and has long become an object of marked ridicule to the agents of France. As to the chiefs of Barbary themselves, they take continued advantage of these errors in our conduct; and being fully aware that, by a steady perseverance in their calumniating of, and their complaining to ministers against, the English consul, he is sure of being removed, whereby his place is occupied by an-

other, ignorant of their characters, and who, according to custom, comes charged with presents, they merely suffer him to remain quiet until he becomes acquainted with their nefarious practices. Incalculable mischief has hitherto arisen from our government having been induced to pay so much attention to the unfounded charges of these people; and a British minister would do well to recollect, whenever a complaint is transmitted from Barbary against any of our consuls, that it invariably originates in the firmness evinced by them to maintain our rights, and prevent those incessant violations of good faith, promises, and treaties, which are daily practised by the respective governments of Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoly.

To prevent future impositions of the above nature, how very easy would it be to send one or two men of war, with powers vested in the commanders to inquire into the allegations of both parties? however, the plan already proposed of visiting the different states periodically would do away with all ground of misunderstanding, and prevent those endless perplexities occasioned to the government at home, by those never-ending dissensions which now occur continually.

Singular as it may appear, the political affairs of Barbary were, some years ago, conducted by the minister for the home department; but they have been subsequently transferred to the secretary at war, without producing any better effect. That

the regulations of these states, uninfluenced as they are by the received and established laws of civilized nations, should be in the hands of the admiralty, is self-evident: in fact, the only means of negotiating with such people is by the appearance of a naval or military force; the most superficial judge of human nature will bear testimony to the truth of this assertion, the result of a close and attentive examination of their general character. It is only by impressing on the mind of a Barbary chief a due sense of your power, and means of annoying him, that he will ever be induced to accede to your wishes; for, alike a stranger to the ties of friendship, as he is by religious motives inimical to the Christian powers, how could it be expected that any concessions can be obtained from him, except through the medium of that most powerful arbiter of political right—force? It is the engine which we use against each other in Europe: how much more necessary is its adoption when treating with savages?

Nothing can be more erroneous than an opinion entertained at home, that the chiefs of those countries attach any importance to the demands or correspondence of our generals who may command at Malta or Sicily: on the contrary, they have in many instances, particularly when requests have been made to deliver up the cargoes of British subjects, treated them with utter contempt. The method adopted by some officers of addressing letters direct to the Bashaw of Tripoly, instead of

through the consul, their legitimate channel, is, I believe, contrary to established usage: it is, at all events, excessively impolitic, and always productive of the worst effects; for besides doing no good, this mode of proceeding renders the consul nugatory, while it serves to lower him in the eyes of the Barbarians.

It frequently happens that the letters of our commanders are of such a nature, that it would be highly dangerous for our interests to present them. In this case, the consul is reduced either to the alternative of doing a serious injury to the national cause, or of offending the writer, by which he draws upon himself his future resentment.

We can never become thoroughly acquainted with this country, or hope firmly to establish ourselves in it, without giving a greater degree of encouragement to those mercantile men who may be desirous of settling here. The consular system also requires to be radically improved; for, instead of making that most important charge *a ministerial job*, it should only be confided to persons of integrity, experience, and an intimate knowledge of the country they are sent to; they should, besides, go upon a charge in which the sovereign of a great nation is to be represented, not like itinerant merchants, but arrayed with marks of distinction, and accompanied by a respectable train of attendants; such as a clergyman, physician, secretary, &c. This is practised by Spain, and would, indeed, impress these people with a proper idea of

our national importance, and be the ground-work of innumerable advantages in every point of view. I may add with truth, that until something of this sort is done, our affairs in Barbary must inevitably go on in the ruinous and unprofitable manner they now do.* A British consul should, on no con-

* The present method of sending a consul out being explained, will serve to account for the state of our relations in these places. Having secured the patronage of ministers, a man is promised the first vacancy that occurs on the coast of Barbary or Greece. He is usually a person of very limited fortune, and more often in great want of money; he therefore naturally looks to his promised appointment as the road which may lead to the accumulation of riches. Previous to his setting out, a large sum is required for his equipment, &c., which is generally procured from some friend at an exorbitant interest; this is embarked at his own risk, and he proceeds to his new destination, where, on his arrival, he probably finds the situation occupied by some ignoramus; his predecessor having, according to custom, departed some months before, and been allowed to appoint his own *locum tenens;* a native Jew in his chancery, and another occupying the place of broker; both these are invariably in the French interest, and even paid by that power to act the part of spies against us. Thus situated, ignorant of the language, manners, and vitiated customs of the people, what chance can a new consul possibly have of success?—He, in fact, soon perceives the difficulty of his situation: unequal to the charge he has undertaken, and, what is still worse, unsupported at home, disgust follows, and the nation's interests are forsaken; and, after having remunerated himself for the expense of his outfit, by no means an easy task, the Barbary consul returns to England, where his reiterated attempts to obtain a hearing, and communicate the results of his inquiries abroad, are often met with an incredible degree of indifference.

sideration, be suffered to trade: I know it to have hitherto been productive of the greatest mischief: in fact, how is it possible for any man to act in an impartial manner with people who refer to him in a variety of commercial cases, wherein he himself is likely to be personally interested?—Besides, a consul who speculates is not only often induced to cultivate the friendship of these governments at the expense of his own, but he is unable to fulfil the duties of his situation, which are generally extremely multifarious. Too much cannot be said on the importance of sustaining the consular dignity both as to emolument and the prompt support of the administration at home. By the first he is secured from corruption; the second prevents our flag from being insulted, and affords us every advantage in the commerce, and from the resources of the country he is in. Having said thus much, in the hope that it will excite the serious consideration of men in power, justice to the character of our present consul, Mr. Langford, obliges me to add, that he has never been concerned in any commercial speculations whatever, during the eighteen years which he has served in Barbary; he is, consequently, little, if any thing, richer than when he came here. With this exception, that, as I understand to be a positive fact, he lost property to a very great amount in his Majesty's ship Hindostan, in 1804, when that ship was burnt in the Bay of Rosas, and has never received the smallest compensation from government, although both him-

self and lady very narrowly escaped from the ship just before she blew up!—It would be a real advantage to the nation if a handsome gratuity was allowed to newly appointed consuls, and their salaries increased from eight hundred to a thousand, or even twelve hundred pounds, which would be amply sufficient on this coast for every purpose, and render all commercial views unnecessary.

I am next to treat of the disorganized and incongruous state of our vice consuls all over the coast, where we happen to have such appointments; for there are many places of considerable importance at which there is no British vice consul, and at others the place is occupied by a Jewish merchant, or an Italian, who may have been settled for some time in the country. The latter is naturally a subject of France, and the whole of them without any emolument whatever from the British government. They are appointed by the consuls-general, and remunerated by a tax levied on each ship, or vessels under our flag, that may chance to visit their port. Nothing can exceed the inefficiency of all these people wherever I have visited on this coast; they are perfect nonentities, or the laughing-stock of French agents and tools of their governors, without authority, or even the means of enforcing it. On the other hand, how is it with those of the enemy? they are all paid, and invariably people of some talent! I ought to have observed before, that the consuls-general of Buonaparte are

strictly forbidden to trade, are endowed with uncommon powers, and allowed a most liberal salary.

Would it not be highly useful to us, if forty or fifty of our own countrymen were selected to fill the situations of vice consuls? they might live on a trifling stipend, be permitted to traffic, and by learning the Moorish language soon encourage others to settle amongst these people; they would at all events enable our merchant vessels to avoid a thousand inconveniences to which they are now continually subjected on the coast. Should such a plan be ever adopted, they should be visited periodically by one of our men of war in the same way as proposed for the consuls-general.

The first object of importance to be considered with respect to the Barbary States, is thus in the choice of our consuls, and like the government of France, affording them proper and effectual support, when once appointed. This may be said to be the grand point upon which all our affairs turn; for without the utmost precaution in the one and the other, we shall ever be subject to the existing inconveniences and disadvantages arising from a want of the necessary attention to this subject. Experience, integrity, and firmness, are the ingredients which appear to me as requisite to form an unexceptionable representative of the British nation in this country. His efforts would not, however, be of the smallest utility, if not in

the confidence of his own government, and positively certain of their support; the entire want of this is the chief cause of our being so frequently ill used and spoliated, while the agents of France are enabled, without a single vessel of war to support them, to command the resources of a whole country. It has been a general complaint for many years, that whenever an English consul displayed firmness, and a determination to support the dignity of his country in Barbary, the chiefs have invariably made him the object of personal resentment, and after treating him with every indignity, and rendering his situation uncomfortable, have written to his government for the purpose of having him removed, to be replaced by a more tractable subject. A striking instance of this sort occurred at Tripoly about forty-six years ago, when the Honorable Mr. Frazer, after having experienced the most brutal treatment from Ali Bashaw, father of the present, was recalled in consequence of an alledged complaint to the minister of that time, Lord Halifax. Mr. Frazer appears to have been very intimately acquainted with this country, and the characteristic policy of its chiefs: in one of his letters, dated April the 17th, 1765, and addressed to the above mentioned nobleman, I recollect to have seen the following strong observation:—"Your lordship will, by this time, have a comprehensive idea of the Tripolitan manners, and the impossibility of procuring restitution of any thing con-

siderable, without the interposition of fear or force; bring or give them any thing, you are the best power on earth; come to require any thing, words cannot express their artifices, their invectives against the consul, and infernal designs, supported by lies and breach of faith." The foregoing emphatical outline of these people is, if possible, more applicable to them now, than it was fifty years ago. Upon this Mr. Bruce, in one of the letters in his Appendix, No. XXIII, after complaining of the Bashaw's neglect in not having sent an escort as he promised, to convey him to Tripoly from the frontiers, by which four of his men were killed, and his own life considerably endangered, has the following interesting passage:—"I cannot mention this gentleman, without regretting that he is, as I hear, recalled upon a complaint of the Bashaw of Tripoly, who, after many other irregularities, at last confined him to his house. This grand complaisance to these Barbary gentlemen, who answer the complaints for national grievances by personal exceptions against the consul, will soon have the effect to make neutral freighters believe that our flag is insecure and without protection, and will, in the end, certainly throw all this caravan trade into the hands of the French, who support their consul and colours with the utmost spirit, both at Tunis and Tripoly." Mr. Frazer's case excited the indignation of every European consul in Tripoly; all of whom communicated the circumstance to

their respective governments. That the foregoing remarks should be most strictly applicable to the present moment, will justly occasion surprize; yet such is really the case, and I will even go further, by asserting, that we have not a single consul or agent, from Mogador to Alexandria, who has not experienced its effects.

The present Bashaw has, however, exceeded all his predecessors in acts of personal violence towards the subjects of our sovereign; and particularly on a recent instance, when his Highness's unprecedented and violent conduct to the consul was so glaring, that it deserves to be recorded, both as a just exposure of his character, and an undeniable proof of the danger to be apprehended from our not affording proper support to his Majesty's representatives in these states. A dispute having arisen between one of the Maltese inn-keepers, and the Jew who farms the exclusive right of importing spirits and wine, the latter struck the Maltese, and cut his head open; the matter being naturally brought before our consul, under whose immediate protection the natives of Malta are placed, as being British subjects; he remonstrated strongly with the Bashaw, and even insisted on the Jew's being punished for his conduct; but far from paying the smallest attention to his representation, his Highness gave the affair a partial hearing, and influenced by the Jew's assertions, granted a *teskira*, or written order, for the

expulsion of the Maltese from Tripoly, by which the unfortunate man was ruined!* The consul, determined to persevere in the execution of his duty, particularly in a case wherein such a gross insult had been offered to the British nation, and the treaty violated, could not even succeed in obtaining an audience for some time, although that can never be denied, as stipulated in the treaties. When he did, and proceeded to vindicate the injured rights of an English subject, as became the agent of his Majesty, his Highness flew into a most violent rage, and starting from his throne, ran towards Mr. Langford; when, being on the point of drawing one of his pistols, the attendants interposed, and represented the rashness of his conduct. The feelings of our consul at that moment can be more easily imagined than described, although it is highly creditable that he should have throughout so trying an affair sustained the dignity of his character, and the most settled equanimity of temper. The events which succeeded this outrage have been of a nature still more painful to the consul's feelings, and equally injurious to the British interests here; but as all the facts are before his Majesty's government, which will doubtless take

* Salvatore Frendo, who was present at the castle on this occasion, furnished me with the above particulars, which have been fully corroborated by the English dragoman.

such measures as the circumstance requires, I shall forbear to dwell on them any longer, and turn to another subject. It is, however, important to add, that the British consul never went near the Bashaw's person, although alternately threatened and invited to do so, for upwards of six months; until his Highness recognizing his errors, apologized, and caused a royal salute of twenty-eight guns to be fired in honor of his Britannic Majesty.

In addition to the above, another instance of the Bashaw's violence, and of a still more outrageous cast, remains to be put upon record. Having conceived a dislike to the Portuguese consul, Mr. M'Donogh, who had rendered his Highness the most important services, during a residence of nineteen years in the regency, a messenger was one day sent to his house to inform him from the Bashaw, "that understanding he was about to leave Tripoly, (for in fact Mr. M'Donogh having arranged some matters in which the Spanish interests were very deeply involved, was going back to Cadiz with the result of his negotiation) his Highness begged to remind him that until a debt of 4,000 Spanish dollars alleged to be due to some Jews by Mr. M'Donogh should be paid he could not leave the Regency; and furthermore, if he did not pay it immediately, the Bashaw would put him in prison and load him with irons." It was in vain that Mr. M'Donogh represented his being totally ignorant of any debt

of the kind; and, in his reiterated explanations observed, that after a lapse of so many years it was very singular such a demand should have been made on him: he therefore, for some time, resisted the demand until a guard was actually placed at his door to prevent his going out; in fact, converting the consular house of a friendly state, particularly the near ally of England, into a prison. Naturally alarmed at the extraordinary conduct of his Highness, any further remonstrance was useless; and Mr. M'Donogh consented to give bills on London for a sum, thus extorted from him, in the hope that the sacrifice, great as it was, might lead to his emancipation: it did not, however, produce any such effect; for having delivered the bills of exchange, he was informed that he could not leave Tripoly, till the payment of these bills was ascertained! This much injured personage was therefore, contrary to every law of justice and reason, forcibly detained for several months after; and even when the account of his bills having been taken up came to this place, found considerable difficulty, in getting away.

A comment upon this flagitious act of the Bashaw is, I am sure, quite unnecessary; it is certainly unparallele i in the history of this country, and independently of the claim on Mr. M'Donogh having been unjust, the conduct of his Highness throughout only served to prove that, in thus offering an insult to all civilized nations, he wished to gratify his private resentment against an individual to

whom he will ever be under the greatest obligations.*

His Highness's misconduct has not, however, been exclusively demonstrated to Great Britain and her allies, for the American and Swedish representatives have both experienced acts of the most daring violence at his hands. The latter, a Mr. Bulstroom, having very lately received letters of recall from his government, together with instructions to inform the Bashaw that the annual tribute of eight thousand dollars would be withheld until the re-establishment of the Swedish commerce in the Mediterranean, made known the circumstance accordingly, and on the very same day his Highness sent Hadge Massen,† accompanied by a guard of soldiers, to his house, for the purpose of extorting a draft on the Swedish Consul at Algiers for the tribute money. On Mr. Bulstroom's refusal to comply with so unjust a demand, he was immediately put under arrest, and several soldiers placed in his house, who behaved to him in a most outrageous manner: the head of this gang of ruffians would not even leave the poor old man's chamber,

* Mr. M'Donogh was for many years attached to the British consulate under Mr. Lucas, and is known to have rendered very important services to Great Britain, both at Algiers and this place. He was patronized by the great Lord Nelson, who appreciated his merits and procured him his present appointment: it may, however, be said, that this gentleman's hopes vanished with the ever-to-be-lamented hero of Trafalgar!

† See Biographical Sketches

during the hours of sleep: at length, worn out with ill treatment, he consented to give the draft, and was then, with difficulty, released from imprisonment in his own house but not suffered to go outside the city gates; the guard would not, however, leave his house till they forced him to pay them one hundred and fifty dollars by way of fee for their attendance!

Having, I trust, said enough to elucidate this part of the Bashaw's general policy to foreign states, it may be of use to add, that whenever two consuls, no matter of what nation, betray a disposition to be on terms of friendship, recourse is immediately had to calumnies of every sort to separate them, and excite mutual disgust; and for this purpose there are always an abundance of spies in Tripoly: the plan has been but too successful on several occasions, particularly where a sense of duty, as well as interest, dictated a different mode of thinking to the parties.

The system of intrigue and calumny pursued here, especially by the agents of France, is truly diabolical; and although the Bashaw is perfectly aware of their hatred towards his person and government, yet, through his natural weakness and indecisive character, he suffers himself to be continually deluded by them. It is ever the study of a French emissary to represent every thing that occurs in the political circle, as highly unfavorable to Great Britain; and the people here are so extremely ignorant of any just mode of reason-

ing, or of what is really going on in Europe, that they place implicit confidence in those who relate the best story.

It has long, and in my opinion with great justice, excited general surprize that we have not mediated and brought about a peace between Sicily and the Barbary powers in the vicinity of that island. I have often, but without success, endeavoured to ascertain the moral and political causes of this truly extraordinary circumstance, more particularly as, for a considerable period, it has been a matter of the utmost facility on our part, and which might have been effected so as to have favoured the general interests of the Mediterranean, but those of England in particular. Many persons in this country, have either been weak or wicked enough to assert, that the English ministry do not think it consistent with sound policy to crush the naval power of these states, so long as they do not annoy ourselves; this opinion is extremely prevalent, and if it has any foundation in truth, does not, I confess, reflect much credit upon the wisdom of those with whom it originated. I can never be induced to believe that so narrow-minded an idea could ever have emanated from the breast of a British statesman: if it has, let us hope that no time will be lost in exploding a maxim, so strongly in opposition to reason and good sense; for without entering into a more detailed examination of the subject, do not the many acts of violence towards our ships and subjects,

which are upon record, amply prove that we have been the principal sufferers by them? and until their means of sending out armed vessels is either removed, or they are obliged to conform to the established laws of nations, is it possible to expect any thing better from them? The probability of a more intimate alliance with Sicily, by which the fate of that island may become more identified with our own, is also, I presume, a powerful argument in favor of our speedily putting an end to a species of warfare, as contrary to every law of civilized society, as it is repugnant to the feelings of humanity. The many outrages which have occurred in the prosecution of this unnatural hostility, since Malta has been in our possession, are considered as a satire on the British nation; and a knowledge of the fact induces me to add, that the chiefs of Barbary have alone been prompted to act in the way they have, from the apparent indifference of our government.

It ought, however, to be observed, that if, on the one hand, a reconciliation between these powers and Sicily is an object which deeply interests Great Britain; on the other, no period was ever more favorable to its accomplishment than the present, while a British army is stationed in the above-named island, and the Mediterranean is covered with our ships of war. With respect to Tripoly, I really believe that an amicable arrangement, and liberation of the unhappy captives are only suspended because we have not in-

terfered ; which circumstance has been considered by his Highness, the Bashaw, as a tacit approbation of his prosecuting the war with that defenceless island.

The mode hitherto adopted by the Barbary cruizers of disembarking on the coast of Sicily and its dependencies, requires to be noticed. Those enemies of the human race, availing themselves generally of the darkness of night, arm several boats, land in the vicinity of some unprotected village, and carry off whole families ; these, on arriving here, are exposed to public sale in the market place, and bought by some proprietor whose heart has never been warmed with any sentiment of benevolence ; they are conveyed to a distant province, destined either to lead a life of miserable bondage, or, as more frequently happens, to fall under the stripes and oppression of a merciless master. The mingled feeling and sorrow which must agitate the minds of the poor Sicilians when taken away in this manner, are more easily imagined than described : there are few so devoid of sensibility, as not to sympathize with their sufferings ; but the tear of pity which an Englishman willingly sheds on such an occasion, is soon followed by a sentiment of surprize, that a remedy is not applied to the evil. Upon the base policy of allowing the Barbary powers to make slaves of christians, I shall take a future opportunity of expatiating ; and in dismissing this melancholy subject for the present, have only to add, that the

rights of human nature, independent of political consideration, call for the immediate interference of his Majesty's ministers.

Having attempted to explain all that appeared necessary for your forming a tolerable idea of the politics of the Regency, it will not be improper to state what his Highness's military and naval force consist in, and by which he has contrived to commit so many depredations on other states, besides supporting his authority at home. The revenues consist of the tributes paid by the various Arab tribes who inhabit the interior; but that of Fezzan is very often stopped and taken by the refractory Arabs under the Sheik Safanassa, on its way to the capital. There are also considerable taxes levied on the Jews; and to the sales of annual monopolies, duties on exports and imports, extortions, and the tributes (when paid) of Denmark, Sweden, and America, may be added the piracies of the cruizers. It is, however, impossible to form an estimate of the total amount, as the sources of revenue are all very precarious.*

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* The following sketch, communicated by a person who has resided here for many years in a mercantile capacity, may serve to give some idea of the revenues of his Highness the Bashaw.

ANNUAL ESTIMATE.

	Sp. Dol.
Custom-house duties on Exports and Imports, together with the farming of Skins and Tobacco . . .	20,000
Farming of Soap	3,000
Farming of Wine, of Spirits	20,000

There is no regular army in the Regency. Whenever troops are wanted an indiscriminate

	Sp. Dol.
The Governors of Derne and Bengazi remit about . .	22,000
Produced on the sale of Barilla	20,000
Tribute paid by the Jews	2,000
Annual Tribute of Forty Slaves from Fezzan . . .	4,000
Gold Dust from Gadames	4,000
Total . .	95,000

To the above items of revenue may be added the undermentioned, the produce of which are uncertain.

Each date tree in the Regency pays a duty of one bohunseen.

Every well in the Regency pays a duty of twenty bohunseens.

Tithe of ten per cent. on the produce of lands.

Success of the cruizers.

Punishments commuted by fine.

Presents from Turkish, Moorish, and Jew merchants.

Property of all those who are denominated traitors.

Property of all those who die intestate, or without issue.

Farming out ovens and cook shops.

Although the Bashaw's income appears rather limited, it should be considered that what he gets is, with a very trifling exception, clear profit. The money chiefly in circulation being coined at the castle from old brass guns, is, through the medium of tax gatherers and Jew brokers, immediately exchanged for sequins and Spanish dollars; which are conveyed into the hasnar, or treasury, never to return into circulation; the Moors, on these occasions, shrewdly remark on his Highness nearly in the same way that the fox did of the lion's den:—

Omnia se adversum spectantia, nulla retrorsum.

In one instance, when the Bashaw pretended to be very much in want of money, he caused a great quantity of sequins com-

levy takes place, and all those who may be called upon are obliged to march. The utmost extent of any armed force, hitherto raised, has not, I am informed, exceeded fifteen thousand men; which would be routed by a body of two thousand Europeans. During the summer, a small camp of infantry and cavalry is formed outside the city gates: the cavalry are tolerably well mounted, and very active in the evolutions used by the Mamelukes of Egypt: the whole number kept on foot by the Bashaw do not exceed three thousand, and they receive scarcely any pay.

When the yearly tribute becomes due, the Bashaw's eldest son is sent out with an armed force to collect it: his progress is marked with rapine and plunder; as, instead of levying a regular contribution, he forcibly takes away property

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posed of base metal to be coined, and when washed over with gold they were circulated in the interior.

The wants of his Highness are all supplied by bartering the productions of the Regency for those articles of European produce which may be required. Thus his agents at Malta exchange cattle, barilla, skins, and the cargoes of prizes brought in here, for gunpowder, cloth, threads, &c. &c.; and timber for building is brought from Albania and the Morea, by Turkish merchants, who take slaves in lieu, which are sold again at Constantinople and Smyrna. Subsistence for the Harem, and those who reside in the palace is generally procured by frauds and oppressions amongst the Arab tribes in the interior. The wages paid to attendants are scarcely worth mentioning; and as to the Jews, they are compelled to labour gratis, whenever the Bashaw chooses to call upon them.

equal to the degree of prosperity enjoyed by each individual; and, upon the slightest complaint, inflicts the severest punishment.

As to the naval force, an account of it will, no doubt, surprize those who hear by the frequent captures by his Highness's cruizers; and that he has the impertinence to declare war against several nations of Europe at the same moment. As there are no materials for ship-building in the Regency, they are obliged to get them all from Malta and the Adriatic: so that there is nothing doing in the arsenal; which is quite empty at present. The armed vessels are confined to six, mounting from six to sixteen guns. The Bashaw fits out all the cruizers himself, and is their sole proprietor: each cruize generally lasts a month; the crews are paid a small stipend three days previous to sailing; the only provision found by his Highness is biscuit, oil, and water; the rest of their food is plundered from the vessels of whatever nation they meet with at sea. On their return they are all searched, and deprived of any valuable plunder they may have got: no person but the Bashaw is allowed to have any share in a prize; the Rais, however, always contrives to secrete a proportion for himself; the only advantage considered to belong to him is the temporary approbation of the Bashaw, and an honorary present of a scarlet bernouse trimmed with gold, which is considered as one of the greatest marks of distinction conferred in the Regency. They carry proportionate

crews: the piracies of these vessels are now directed against the Sicilians, Sardinians, and Greek ships bearing the Ottoman flag, who are found near Malta. His Highness has threatened to make reprisals against the Spaniards shortly, if a debt alledged to be due to his subjects by the consul of that power is not paid.* In fact, his Highness would most willingly make war against the whole world so long as he was not obliged to bear a personal share in its perils and dangers.

The Bashaw, as already observed, is always furnished with a firman from the Grand Seignior, before he is recognized as head of the Tripoline government. His Highness, together with the Bey of Tunis, and Dey of Algiers, are, in fact, nominally subjects of the Porte; yet, from the peculiar circumstances of the times, and their remoteness from Constantinople, the Bashaw of this Regency has ordered his corsairs to commit

* Mr. Sousa, was formerly a slave in Algiers, and much fitter to fill the duties of that situation than those of a consul-general, where he has contributed to involve the Spanish affairs most seriously. His dependence on the Bashaw is such that every order and act of violence from him must be obeyed and winked at. Mr. Sousa's conduct in having, according to his Highness's request, assumed the British consular duties, while Mr. Langford was at variance with the Bashaw, cannot be too severely reprehended. He must, however, be fully aware of the infamous policy of his Highness, who, since writing the above, has sent his cruizers out in the face of our navy, and captured several Spanish vessels; in fact, there is actually a war between that nation and Tripoly.

depredations on the property of Greeks and others navigating under the Ottoman flag. Whenever a piracy takes place, the injured party makes their first application through the Grand Seignior, who sends a *chaoux*, or messenger, with an order to have the property restored; and this man is usually attended in his journey here by the principal sufferer or his agent, at whose expense the inefficacious undertaking goes on. The *chaoux*, three days after his arrival here, presents his firman to the Bashaw in full divan, and is lodged at the palace till an occasion offers for his return to Constantinople: when this occurs, a present is given to the messenger, in order to silence him; and another, which generally consists of negroes or eunuchs, according to the magnitude of the crime, is sent to the Porte, with an answer to the firman, excusing the piracy, or containing a promise of speedily arranging the matter to the party's satisfaction, without the most distant idea of putting it into execution. It is in this manner that many Greek ships, loaded with British and other property, have been unlawfully captured, and sold for the benefit of his Highness.

Piracies during these last three years have extended principally to the British, Austrian, Spanish, and Ottoman flags. In one instance, which occurred very lately, a Greek vessel, under a British licence, was actually taken out of one of the Grand Seignior's ports;* and the sufferers, who

* Santareen.

are English merchants at Malta, have received no redress whatever, notwithstanding the consul's efforts. To convince you how little the Bashaw thinks of the Grand Seignior's authority over him, the following fact deserves to be recorded. In 1809, he ordered the Imperial consul's flag to be struck in this city, alleging that the Emperor of Austria had never sent him a present, nor recognized him as the sovereign of Tripoly; although his Highness well knew, that in the treaties between the Porte and Austria, ships trading under the latter power's flag are fully guaranteed by the former. Soon after the above event, one of the predatory chiefs, Rais Shelly, while out on a cruize, met a large Austrian ship proceeding from Smyrna to Malta, and freighted by British merchants. As she happened to be very well armed, and rather superior to his own corsair, it was necessary to have recourse to stratagem: he therefore hailed the ship, and told the master, in very friendly terms, that he had lost his boat in a gale of wind, and was so excessively distressed for one, that he would give him any thing to lend him a boat. Entirely unsuspicious of a Tripoline vessel, the Austrian invited Shelly on board, and very generously offered to supply him with what he seemed to be so much in want of: the wary pirate went with a number of armed Turks; and, pretending to be on the most friendly terms with the Imperial captain, he walked about the ship's deck, measuring the boats, and admiring every

thing he saw; at length, having carefully examined the boats, he turned to the captain, saying, "I find your boats will not answer my purpose, but the ship will, and she shall go into Tripoly with me!"—It was too late for resistance, and the vessel was accordingly brought in here, where her cargo has been confiscated, although *bona fide* the property of Englishmen living in your island. The anecdote is strictly true; it bears a strong similitude to a well-known fable, and is most particularly calculated to illustrate the Moorish character.

Although many political facts might be adduced, and reflections made, to prove the necessity of our adopting a totally different line of conduct in our relation with this regency, I hope enough has been said: the opposition of interests created by its real or meditated hostility against some of our nearest allies; its deliberate acts of violence committed on the persons and properties of friendly powers, ever subject to the machinations of a powerful enemy, are points that demand serious and prompt consideration; and until they are corrected, we cannot expect to derive those advantages, whether of a political or commercial nature, from Tripoly, which it would undoubtedly afford under more favourable circumstances.

In the course of the foregoing letters, I have probably disseminated some opinions, which may be thought rather chimerical; the experience of

the last twenty years has, however, proved, that, through the talents and perseverance of our enemies, speculations infinitely more extravagant than these have been often and fatally realized. In a short time I shall visit Tunis, from whence I shall have the pleasure of addressing you, and of transmitting an account of that kingdom; a country which is, on every account, more important than the regency of Tripoly.

LETTERS FROM TUNIS.

LETTER I.

Dans les beaux siècles des Arabes, les sciences et les arts fleurirent chez ces Numides, aujourd'hui ils ne savent pas même regler leur année, et en faisant sans cesse le metier de pirate, ils n'ont pas un pilote qui sache prendre hauteur, pas un bon constructeur de vaisseau ; ils achetent des Chrétiens, et surtout des Hollandais, les agrès, les canons, la poudre, dont ils se servent pour s'emparer de nos vaisseaux marchands, et *les puissances Chrétiennes, au lieu de detruire ces ennemis communs, sont occupés, à se ruiner mutuellement.*

VOLTAIRE, *Essai sur les Mœurs, &c.*

Sea Coast of the Tunis Regency—Notices of the Interior—Observations on Commerce—Military and Naval Remarks—Geographical and other Notices — Tunis — Carthage — Political Remarks.

Tunis, 1811.

I now proceed, my dear friend, to give you some account of this Regency, which is, for many reasons, infinitely more important than the preceding one of Tripoly; it will, therefore, afford me great satisfaction, if my observations tend to enlarge your knowledge of a country generally interesting to Great Britain, but more particularly so to the islands of Sicily and Malta.

With respect to its amazing resources and the natural beauty of the country, few places can be compared to Tunis. The sea-coast, commencing at Cape Roux, in latitude 37° 0′ north,

longitude 9° 30′ east, extends eastward towards Cape Bon; thence taking a south-eastern direction, it terminates at the fertile and populous island of Jerbi [the Meninx Insula of Pliny]; the whole forming an irregular line, nearly five hundred miles in length. The interior is inhabited from one to two hundred and fifty miles southward, until you arrive at the mountains which separate Tunis from the Biled il Gerid, or Country of Dates. Although the Regency is watered by various streams of minor importance, the only rivers of any consequence are the Mejerdah and Wad el Quibir; and the first of these, so celebrated as the Bagrada of antiquity, empties itself into the sea, between Cape Carthage and Porto Farina. There are many considerable towns and villages on its banks, containing from five to fifteen thousand inhabitants. The source of this river is entirely unknown to the Tunisians; they have merely discovered, that, winding through a most productive and picturesque country, it extends several hundred miles in a south-west direction, passing one hundred south of Constantina. The whole country in the vicinity of Mejerdah is very well cultivated, and produces large quantities of corn, olives, wax, honey, together with cattle in the greatest abundance.* The Wad el Quibir rises

* It is much to be regretted that we have no correct maps either of the interior or coast of Africa, particularly Barbary: that prefixed to Dr. Shaw's work, is replete with errors; for instance, Cape Bon is placed forty miles out of its latitude, the

in the neighbourhood of El Keif, and joins the sea near Tabarca.

An extensive tract of country, situated between the above river and Constantina, and equal in fertility to any part of the Regency, is but thinly inhabited, being usually the seat of war when any real hostility takes place with Algiers.

The mountains near Tunis abound in silver, copper, and lead mines; there is also one of quicksilver near Porto Farina. Jealousy and indolence are the causes why these sources of national wealth are not turned to account. Amongst the exports of the Carthaginians were enumerated copper, tin, and lead.

The country eastward of the above river is by far the most populous and best cultivated of the Regency: there are also several large towns and villages there, besides innumerable hordes of Arabs. The chief productions consist in wheat, barley, oil, wool, bees-wax, tallow, and a variety of other articles, which form the exports of the Regency.

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longitude is nearly as incorrect. In the interior arrangement of it, there are many towns misplaced, and others not inserted at all. The Italian geographers have lately attempted a map of Tunis; but, on examination, I have found it as defective as any of our own productions. Upon the coast of Caramania there is a ship of war employed at this moment, but a variety of causes have retarded the exertions of Captain Beaufort, an officer of great abilities, who was nominated to perform that service. The subject is of too important a nature to be overlooked much longer.

The celebrated city of Cairouan, situated about forty miles to the southward of Susa, was formerly the largest in the kingdom, and principal seat of government. It is now said to contain more than fifty thousand inhabitants. The commercial intercourse of this town is carried on with Sfax and Susa; it consists chiefly in the above-mentioned commodities, together with large quantities of dates, bullocks, hides, goat-skins, &c.

South of the range of mountains, called Gibbel* Mejerdah, which terminates the Regency of Tunis, you enter the country of Dates. The limits of this extensive and highly productive region are not yet known; however, the Bey draws a very considerable revenue from the inhabitants: when the camp is sent out for the purpose of collecting the tribute, they only penetrate from one to two hundred miles into the interior, and from the inhabitants of a few large towns the contribution is extremely productive.

The account given to me of these people, describes them as being a quiet and extremely industrious community. I have seen several hundred of them at this place lately, when they came in a large body to complain of his Highness's officers, and I was much surprized to perceive that they are a remarkably fine looking people, being much taller than the Tunisians generally are: they a reof a dark complexion and possess a sedate

* The Arabic for a mountain.

dignity of manner unknown to the Tunisian character. They have several manufactures; that which has been carried to the greatest perfection, is the bernouse,* and baracan, a national cloak† and covering, universally worn in Barbary. Corn, dates, and cattle, are abundant. It does not appear that they have any peculiar attachment to their Tunisian neighbours; but the Bey's superiority obliges them to cultivate his friendship. It cannot, however, be said that this country forms an integral part of his Highness's dominions, as they are governed by their own laws, but subject to his revision, and only pay the tribute to avoid greater evils.

Having attempted to give you an idea of the interior, I am now to describe the sea-coast, which is of course to us the principal object of importance. There is a small creek called La Cala de Francia, which, though no longer under the Bey's dominion, I shall think it necessary to notice. It is situated a few leagues to the westward of Cape Roux, and in the immediate vicinity of the coral banks.

The town of La Cala stands on a peninsula of spongy rock, ten leagues to the eastward of Bona, N. W. and S. E. by compass; the harbour opens

* The shawls made at Jerbi for the Grand Seignior are of exquisite texture: they are sent to Constantinople inclosed in canes, and may be drawn through a finger ring.

† This was the vestment worn by our Saviour. "Now this coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout."

to the N. W., and is about fifty fathoms wide with rocks on each side; its length is one hundred and fifty fathoms, terminating in a sandy beach of one hundred fathoms. The town is walled round, and has three gates, the principal of which communicate with the country, and the other with the quay. The main street, which is well paved, divides the peninsula longitudinally, and is about sixty feet wide. The buildings on either side consist of a church, Governor's house, various private buildings, large magazines, and several granaries for corn, a cattle mill, guard-house, barracks, cisterns, &c. Most of the houses are two and some three stories high, substantially built of stone, and covered with tiles of European manufacture; many of them are habitable, and some of the granaries fit for the reception of corn, others have the walls perfect but want roofing. The quay is in a dilapidated condition, and the bastion to the northward is in ruins; the guns, of which it appears to have mounted three on each face, are dismounted and useless. There is plenty of room for additional fortifications: the new part of the town is in a ruinous state; yet the whole may be made habitable at a moderate expence. At the bottom of the harbour there are several detached buildings, and among the rest, a mosque and burying ground, a lazaretto, an excellent wall in good repair, and two gardens with a well on each side of them; the whole of these are encompassed with a good wall. On an eminence, to the westward,

there is a windmill, which serves as an excellent land mark. The adjacent country consists of hill and dale, rocky and forest land; the soil near the settlement is light and sandy: the gardens are planted with orange and lemon trees, also vines in great numbers.

Extract of a private letter from a gentleman resident at Bona, in 1810.

"La Cala, which was the chief source of those numerous advantages enjoyed by the French African Company, during a period of above 150 years, ought, I think, be the first object of his Majesty's government. This fertile district produces an immense quantity of grain, particularly excellent wheat, fit for supplying Great Britain with seed, besides barley and beans in the utmost abundance. The Arab Sheik who governs in this neighbourhood, is the firm friend of England and declared enemy of France, so that it is of importance to cultivate his friendship. Besides grain and pulse this country is capable of producing hemp and flax of a superior quality, and in any quantity, by proving to the Arabs that it would be their interest to cultivate those plants. But the most important object appears to be that of ship timber for our navy. I have seen many of the trees that grow in the vicinity of this place, they are all of live oak; the forests commence near La Cala, and extend eastward along the sides of the mountains which divide Algiers and Tunis, and westward along the extensive plains towards Bona. This

timber I have been assured by a person of experience is infinitely superior to English oak: the roads, which were made by the French for its conveyance to La Cala, might be easily repaired. This place, during the time France possessed it, was usually garrisoned by 500 men, besides the inhabitants. The expense of putting it into repair would not, I think, exceed 15,000 Spanish dollars.

"With respect to Bona, where I have resided for some time, I have to observe, that in the hands of the English it may be made a market of great consequence for the introduction of colonial produce, and British manufactures of every description."

The following list of articles exported from Bona in the course of one year, while the French African Company was there, may serve to give you an idea of the resources which might be drawn from that particular quarter, independently of La Cala and Il Col, which is a few leagues to the westward of it:

viz. 10,000 quintals of wool
5,000 ——————— wax
50,000 bullocks' hides
100,000 measures of corn, each measure equal to a Winchester bushel.

From its military position, and the many valuable resources of the surrounding country, this place will, I trust, ere long, become a most useful and important acquisition to Great Britain; and

the following hints relative to the commerce of this interesting part of Barbary, were communicated to me by a person who resided at Bona as British vice consul, for some time, and are so intimately connected with the subject of La Cala, that I cannot doubt of their being acceptable.

Constantina,* the Cirta of antiquity, is about thirty leagues south of Bona;† it contains about 30,000 inhabitants, consisting chiefly of Turks, Moors, and Jews. The surrounding country is very rich, and every where covered with ancient ruins. The district, or province, is governed by a Bey, who holds his appointment from the Dey of Algiers, and pays him a yearly tribute of 200,000 dollars,‡ which sum is levied and extorted from the Arabs. The Bey can bring nearly twenty thousand men into the field, half of whom are cavalry, generally very well mounted, as the breed of horses are excellent. As a military position, Constantina is unequalled, being built on a high hill, which, if properly fortified, would be altogether inaccessible. Its present defences are very miserable, though they answer the purpose of Moorish warfare. You enter the city towards

* The province of this name was under the dominion of Tunis, till about the 16th century, when it was conquered by the Algerines.

† Bona was garrisoned by the Spaniards soon after the capture of Tunis, by Charles V., but retained only a short time.

‡ Equal to three shillings and sixpence each.

the north, over a stupendous Roman bridge, having three rows of lofty arches: and when inside the town, are every where struck with the remains of its former splendor; granite pillars, broken friezes, pedestals, and innumerable Greek, Latin, and Punic inscriptions, are frequently met with. The well known jealousy of the Moors has prevented excavations from being made near this place; but a proper application would soon remove the difficulties that have hitherto operated against that. During the winter, the river which passes the town is both deep and rapid.

The commerce of this province is paralyzed by the same cause that exists all over Barbary—that of a cruel and tyrannical system of government, which is an enemy to every species of improvement; yet a considerable trade was formerly carried on between this country and the French Company at La Cala, as also with the Genoese at Tabarca. The productions exported from Constantina consisted principally of the following:—wheat, barley, calavances, beans, bees' wax, hides, wool, camels' hair, tallow, ostrich feathers, goat and sheep skins, ship timber, bullocks, sheep, poultry, horses, mules, &c.; and wheat, if the exportation was properly encouraged, so as that the people had any inducement to cultivate the land, might be had in very large quantities, at least one hundred thousand quarters annually. The quality varies: that which is most esteemed sells at

the rate of twenty-four Spanish dollars the caffizo.* Barley in a similar proportion might be exported for nine Spanish dollars the caffizo. Beans and calavances of an excellent quality are produced, but their cultivation is very much discouraged, so that the country people only cultivate enough for their own consumption. When the French had possession of La Cala, pulse was exported in very large quantities.

Bees' wax is very abundant, 300 cantars of Malta, might be exported per annum, at the moderate price of twenty-six Algerine dollars each. The wool of Constantina is very much esteemed of; in Tunis and Algiers from 800 to 1000 cantars may be exported annually, at six Algerine dollars the cantar. A trifling duty is exacted by the Bey on the export of these articles. Hides of a good quality, 60,000 per annum, at three dollars and a quarter each; goat and sheep skins, 40,000 yearly, one quarter of an Algerine dollar each, are all ready articles of export.

Camels' hair is not very abundant, as the greatest part of that article is carried to Tunis. Ostrich feathers may be got in large proportions at a cheap rate.

Ship timber grows in great quantities in the vicinity of La Cala and Tabarca; also between

* Two quarters and a half English, and two salms three quarters of Malta measure.

Bona and La Cala. It is bought for a mere trifle, and consists of fine oak, fir, and beech.

Bullocks of a large size are bought from the Bey of Constantina, at from ten to twenty Algerine dollars per head; those of the Arabs are sold much cheaper. A duty on cattle is paid according to the previous stipulation of our government; but seldom exceeds five dollars of Algiers per head. Sheep in the greatest abundance are sold at from one to two dollars per head. Poultry is one Algerine dollar per dozen in any quantity.

The imports consist of all those articles, whether of our colonies, or native manufacture, which are imported at Algiers and Tunis. The vent for them depends on the internal state of the country, and character of the Beys, many of whom dislike much intercourse with Christians, though they are invariably influenced by a well timed bribe, which is of course always given under the title of present—*regalo*.

The people of Constantina possess a great share of hospitality, and respect the name of an Englishman very much; that of a Frenchman is, on the contrary, detested. Travelling in the interior is performed with great safety, and at a trifling expense. It is also remarkable, that the country people of this province are of a distinct character from those who live on the coasts, who are addicted to imposture and theft, while the former exhibit a considerable degree of frankness and honesty.

The coins of this part of Barbary differ very little from those of Algiers; and are piastres and caroobs; the latter is a coin equal to our penny: sixty and seventy caroobs go to a Spanish dollar, according to the state of the money market. Thirty-two caroobs are equal to a piastre.

The weights and measures are like those of Tunis.

Hemp and flax thrive remarkably well on every part of this coast.

The coral fishery alone, independently of its being a most lucrative branch of commerce to the nation, would more than pay every expense which can possibly attend the garrison and establishment necessary for its protection. The great utility of La Cala would consist in opening a commercial intercourse with the interior, both of Algiers and Tunis, by which a large proportion of our manufactures and colonial produce must be introduced;—supplies of corn and cattle might be easily procured, and many useful articles of commerce exported at a cheap rate. The facility of procuring horses and mules would also be very great, more particularly as the best breed is found in this province. The exports would consist of those already mentioned in the commerce of Bona.

Although the multiplied events of this war, added to a considerable increase of our political relations in other parts of the Mediterranean, may have retarded the establishment of a mercantile

company in La Cala,* the great importance of that place, both in a commercial and political point

* Mr. Blankley, to whose ingenuity and talents as a negotiator we are indebted for the nominal possession of La Cala, Bona, and Il Col, and a Mr. Dalzel, formerly Governor of Sierra Leone, have elucidated most clearly the resources of these places, and many advantages which would accrue to Great Britain in the event of their being colonized. A gentleman whom I have met at this place, has also favored me with a very interesting document, calculated to exhibit our situation with respect to them, and at the same time to show how differently things were managed by the French.

"It appears that the British government contracted with the Dey of Algiers, in 1806, for the possession of La Cala, Bona, and Il Col; stipulating to pay the annual sum of 50,000 dollars, (£11,000) for the same, and that since the above period no other benefit has been derived from these valuable acquisitions than the exclusion of the French.

"That the mercantile company of the above nation held La Cala, &c. for more than 150 years, keeping 12,000 tons of shipping and 1,000 seamen constantly employed between them and France.

"That they enjoyed the exclusive privilege of importing the manufactures of France, and of exporting wax, wool, hides, corn, ship timber, &c., with the liberty of purchasing cattle, and sole right to fish on the coral banks.

"That the colony in its worst time, supported itself entirely independent of any aid from the French government.

"That the coral fishery alone would reimburse the British government for a great portion of the annual payment to the Dey.

"That any quantity of cattle might be supplied for Malta, Gibraltar, and the British forces in the Mediterranean.

"That British manufactures and colonial produce might be introduced to a large amount, for the supply of the interior of Africa, &c.

of view, will not, it is hoped, be much longer overlooked or neglected: its occupation has for some years been an object of solicitude with his Majesty's government, and the British consul at Algiers, Mr. Blankley, was directed, in 1807, to

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"That the export of wool, hides, wax, &c., holds out a most lucrative field for mercantile enterprize.

"That the territory about La Cala, &c. produces hemp and flax of a very superior quality, and with proper encouragement might be grown in any quantity.

"That the article of ship timber alone, is an object highly deserving the attention of a maritime country like Great Britain; and here it would be found in any quantity; particularly live oak, with which the arsenal of Toulon was formerly supplied.

"That in point of salubrity of climate and pure air, these districts do not yield to the south of France or Spain."

By a more minute calculation of the attendant expenses and commercial benefits to be derived from the three above mentioned places, the unaccountable delay in occupying them becomes still more extraordinary, as will be seen by the following estimate.

Annual value of exports from Bona . . .	£28,575	0	0
Do. from La Cala	3,500	0	0
Do. Il Col	10,100	0	0
Total prime cost of exports	£42,175	0	0
Total expense of maintaining and paying for the three settlements	18,133	15	0
Total first cost and charges	60,308	15	0
Total nett produce of all the exports in a European market, from which	102,300	0	0
The cost and charges being deducted, there is a profit of	£41,991	5	0

The exportation of grain and cattle of all kinds from La Cala is to be unlimited and duty free.

negotiate with the Dey, upon the terms under which we might take possession of it: a sum of 50,000 dollars per annum was accordingly stipulated to be paid, on a supposition that the coral fishery alone would more than repay that sum and reimburse government, independently of these numerous and still more important advantages to be derived from a commercial intercourse with the interior of Tunis, Constantina, and Algiers. Singular, however, as the fact may appear, we have continued to pay the money without having reaped the smallest benefit, either from the fishery or the place itself: on the contrary, several hundred French and Neapolitan coral boats have been incessantly employed on the banks of Tabarca as well as La Cala, and with the greatest possible success; our possession of that place was officially notified to the respective powers in this country, and Sir A. Ball, at that time Governor of Malta, was directed to send a proper person there in order, not only to examine the spot, but to concert with the Bey of Constantina as to our obtaining supplies of live stock and other articles from that province. Owing, however, to the lame manner in which this negotiation was conducted, the English agent was seized and conveyed to Constantina, where he was forcibly detained for nearly six months: being at length liberated, he returned to Malta, and notwithstanding the harsh treatment he had experienced, yet from the opinion he was led to form of the many advantages which would accrue

from the possession of La Cala, his report to the governor and merchants was so extremely flattering, that the latter immediately formed a company, and subscribed a considerable sum of money to carry on the proposed commerce, while the former gave an unequivocal promise to support the infant undertaking in his capacity of governor and port admiral, which would at all times enable him to grant convoys and the necessary passports. It was at the same time fully expected that a military force would occupy and fortify La Cala, so as to render it a fit place for the reception of inhabitants, and afford proper protection to the coral fishery. This part of the scheme, from a variety of causes, many of which are unknown, has never been put into execution, while the commerce with Bona has experienced unusual depression, and those merchants who contributed to its establishment lost a great part of the money subscribed. I should be sorry to attribute blame to any quarter from the failure of the original plan, and have only to express a hope that, whenever a favorable opportunity offers, the utility and importance of this place will be duly appreciated; for if the colony is established on such a footing as to secure its stability, and not excite too great jealousy on the Bey of Constantina's part, we may in a few years open a source of opulence to the British merchant not to be obtained in any other part of Africa. The political effects of our having a good military position are, I presume, too obvious

to require any further illustration. As to the Bey of Constantina, he will always be kept in a good humour by the timely interposition of douceurs, and the advantages which he must necessarily derive from the commerce of his subjects with the colonists.

In a political point of view, it is scarcely necessary to add, that the possession of La Cala would create an influence which we have not hitherto had in this country, and which, from the successful intrigues of our enemies, is now rendered an object of the utmost importance.

As a military position, this place possesses every advantage: the heights in its immediate vicinity might easily be rendered impregnable, so as to give it ample protection against either a naval or military attack; and an abundant supply of water, and most salubrious climate may be added, amongst its other conveniences.

During the present war, every attempt to establish the coral fishery has proved abortive, although very considerable sums of money have been expended for that purpose.

The number of enemy's privateers, together with the war between Tunis and his Sicilian Majesty, have operated as a bar to this most useful branch of commerce; yet on every account it is necessary that we should speedily avail ourselves of the benefits to be derived from it, and exclude the French, who reaped a most profitable harvest from its possession during the last and present

centuries. As a nursery for seamen, it has, perhaps, been more important than in any respect.

Notwithstanding the many obstacles that have opposed the establishment of the coral fishery, several proprietors at Trapani, more particularly the British vice consul Mr. Malato, have made the utmost efforts to place it on a respectable footing. The political events of Sicily have, however, been unfortunately highly unfavourable to the national prosperity of that unfortunate island; and while the above-named individual, together with some others, were last year (1810), occupied in fitting out a number of coral boats, there came a requisition from the court at Palermo to send them all, together with every sea-faring man that could be found, to join the flotilla at Messina. The execution of this mandate was fatal to the coral fishery; and although some few boats were lately sent, they will not be productive of much profit, as several French privateers are always cruizing in the neighbourhood of La Cala and Tabarca. During the first year after Mr. Blankley's negotiation, there were sixty-three boats collected on the fishery, all of whom paid a certain duty towards the annual sum of 50,000 Spanish dollars: in the succeeding years those who attempted to send any boats have failed, owing to a proper want of protection, (and no establishment being formed at La Cala); it may be hoped, however, that British enterprize will yet surmount these difficulties, as in all other instances. The probable

number of boats, when an equitable arrangement is made for their protection, and they have an asylum to take refuge in, will be at least five hundred: this number would be all supplied from Cagliari and Trapani. Each boat contains on an average eighteen men; so that nine thousand men, the greater part of whom have families to look to them for support, would be annually employed, while they would be at the same time fitted for all the duties of the naval profession.

The duties paid by the French boats to the Bey of Tunis, for the Tabarca fishery, are comparatively trifling.

With respect to Tabarca, thirty miles east of La Cala, it deserves particular notice. This place was, during the greater part of the last century, possessed by the Genoese republic, and a source of infinite advantage to that state. It is a small island situated in a bay, where there is good anchorage for shipping; and which, from its strong military position, was peculiarly adapted to every purpose of commercial intercourse with the coast, and at the same time afforded every protection to the coral fishery, most successfully established there by the Genoese, who retained possession of it till the middle of 1798, when motives of jealousy induced the Barbary powers to drive them away, together with the French company from La Cala. The country about this bay is uncommonly fine, and generally well cultivated. At this moment there are more than two hundred French coral

boats employed; the profits arising from the fishery are immense.

A large and populous town called El-Kief, about sixty miles south of Tabarca, and nearly the same distance from La Cala, is built in the centre of a very woody country. The timber cut down here is of a most excellent quality, and calculated for constructing the largest ships of war; several of his Highness's subjects are continually employed in cutting and preparing it for the naval arsenal here; and, fortunately, it is conveyed to the coast with great facility by means of the Wad el Quibir (Rubricatus of Ptolemy,) which passes near El-Kief, and joins the sea at Tabarca. The possession of this island on the same, or indeed more favorable terms than it was kept by the Genoese, might be very easily procured from the Tunisian government by Great Britain; it would even afford great satisfaction to the Bey: if our government made any propositions to him on the subject, he would doubtless require a handsome pecuniary consideration; but on the other hand, we should obtain the exclusive use of the coral banks near it, the interior commerce, and, what would be of still greater consequence, the privilege of cutting ship timber, of which there is an immense quantity near the coast.*

* The following note from the first volume of Mr. Bruce's Travels, shews that the occupation of Tabarca has been long in contemplation:—"Mr. Bruce had proposed to Lord Halifax to

Bizerta is the next town on the coast of his Highness, and situated at the bottom of a deep bay, about sixty miles east of Tabarca. This place, from a variety of considerations, deserves to be noticed. It was formerly the principal trading town in the Regency, but has now degenerated into a receptacle for the enemy's privateers. The town is poorly fortified, but surrounded by the most beautiful country imaginable. By a strange fatality, the castle, which is intended to defend the town and bay, is commanded by a hill, a quarter of a mile distant, so that it cannot be considered as having any military strength; but its situation is in every respect admirable. Such was the commercial importance of Bizerta a few years ago, that in 1800 there were not less than one hundred and thirty thousand quarters of wheat shipped for the different markets of Europe; but, since that period, no encouragement whatever has been given to its further exportation. In the hands of any other power, this place might become one of the greatest emporiums in the Mediterranean. The celebrated Palus Sisara of Pliny communicates with the bay; so that by deepening the channel, ships of large burden would, with great

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obtain the island of Tabarca from the Bey of Tunis, as a station for the British trade in the Mediterranean; the Bey was willing to grant it, and a description of the place was transmitted to the minister, about the time when the disturbances prevailed at Algiers."

facility, be enabled to enter the great lake. Previous to entering the town, and close to it, there is, separated from the sea only by a narrow neck of land, a capacious harbour, sufficient to contain any number of shipping. The present channel has, in some places, five and six fathoms water, but owing to neglect, becomes every day more shallow. A famous fishery is established here, which is farmed at a high rate by the Bey to the highest bidder; mullet of a large size and fine flavour are the principal fish taken.

Returning to the Lake, I have to observe that it has a free communication with the harbour, is seventy miles in circumference, and surrounded by a country which is extremely productive. The depth of water varies from twenty to fifty fathoms, and from this there is a narrow channel, which leads into another superb piece of water; this has also a circumference of about sixty miles: strange to relate, there is not a boat on either; so that the numerous advantages which might be so easily derived from them, are totally lost. They abound in fish of every kind; and their banks, left almost uninhabited, are only occasionally frequented by those who go for the amusement of fishing or fowling.

The inhabitants of Bizerta, including four hundred Jews, are computed at eight thousand, and are living in a state of the utmost poverty. It has often been represented to the Bey, that this place, by a change of his Highness's policy, might soon

become a source of revenue and opulence; but, from motives which are best known to himself, no hope is entertained of its situation being ameliorated.

Porto Farina, forty miles from the above place, has long been the naval arsenal of his Highness, but, like the other ports of the Regency, it has been suffered to receive all the sand driven in by the north-east gales, and is no longer capable of accommodating large ships. The town is only remarkable for being placed in the neighbourhood of a most luxuriant country. The Mejerdah, as already mentioned, discharges itself into the sea, a few miles south of this place. The number of inhabitants does not exceed nine thousand; they are chiefly supported by agricultural pursuits: a French builder is, however, established there, and continues to build small vessels of war for the Bey. The defences of Porto Farina are in a very poor condition, and by no means formidable, although the town is surrounded by a wall, and has a castle, upon which there are several guns mounted. The number of soldiers kept here is seldom more than one hundred.

Ships of a large burden, and men of war, can anchor in five fathoms water, within two miles of the harbour's mouth; they will, however, be much exposed to easterly winds; with all others it is perfectly safe, the holding ground being most excellent. Owing to the shallowness of the port, the Tunisian squadron is in future to rendezvous at the Goletta.

The Gulf of Tunis, one of the safest in the Mediterranean, is bounded on the west by Cape Farinas, (Apollinis Prom.) and Cape Bon (Hermæum Prom.) on the east. Unlike many others in this country, there is not a single danger to obstruct the navigator, and there is capital anchorage in every part of it, from two to five miles off the shore: including the bay, its circumference is about one hundred and twenty miles. Fleets of any magnitude can always find shelter in the latter thoughout the year. Anchorage for large ships is found between Cape Carthage and the opposite cape which bounds the bay. Five miles south of Cape Carthage you arrive at the Goletta, the greatest commercial and military depôt of his Highness. It is strongly fortified against a naval attack, but commanded by a hill towards the ruins of Carthage, not more than three thousand five hundred yards off, from whence the castle might be easily assailed with mortars. A very large bason has been formed fit to receive all the men of war and merchant vessels of Tunis at this place; and considerable quantities of timber are brought from Tabarca for the purpose of building ships of various dimensions.* The artificers employed here are composed of French, Moors, and Christian slaves. The works constructed at the Goletta were planned by a Dutch officer formerly in the

* Two large frigates and a sloop of war are already laid down, and in a state of forwardness.

service of the Bey, and principally executed by his nephew Mr. Humbert, a gentleman of great talents.

A large lake, above thirty miles in circumference, and only separated from the bay by a very narrow isthmus, is seen extending from the Goletta up to the walls of Tunis, which is six miles from it. Many boats are continually employed on the lake, in conveying goods and passengers to and from the capital. The utmost depth of water found in this lake is not more than six or seven feet, and from the circumstance of several ruins having been discovered on the northern side, that part must have been dry formerly. At present it answers no other purpose than that of yielding an immense quantity of salt, which is chiefly consumed in the Regency; whereas, if brought into cultivation, an amazing extent of fine ground would add to the national wealth, and all the inconveniences of stagnant water, more particularly irksome during the summer months, would be avoided.

The city of Tunis has been so often described, that little more remains to be said than that it could not possibly have been built upon a more unfavourable spot, considering the nature of the adjacent country which presents a variety of situations much better calculated for the construction of a large town. There are several hills on every side (except towards the bay) which altogether obstruct a view of the surrounding scenery,

and must add considerably to the heat experienced in summer. Although large sums have been expended in building forts, and throwing a high wall round the city, it is by no means a strong place. The citadel, called El Gaspa, began by Charles V. and finished by John of Austria, is much out of repair, and commanded by the neighbouring heights: there is also a rising ground near the town on the north, which commands both it and El Bardo, the fortified palace of his Highness, two miles west of Tunis.

Although the number of inhabitants, including thirty thousand Jews, is known to exceed one hundred and thirty thousand, yet Tunis is built without the smallest regularity, and the streets are so extremely narrow and filthy, that it is with difficulty you can pass through them; in fact, nothing but the most salubrious climate on earth could prevent the prevalence of contagious diseases here, as the manners of the people, added to a want of precaution, are calculated to produce the most serious consequences.

The only buildings particularly worth notice are a few mosques, and the new palace just built for the Bey: this is a very magnificent structure, in the Gothic or Saracenic style; and, though not quite finished, promises to be one of the most superb residences in Barbary, as neither pains nor expense have been spared in its decoration. The lower part of this building is fitted up with a variety of fanciful shops, in which the Tunisian

productions are sold by traders, who rent them from the Bey. The idea has been admired as very ingenious, and is really much calculated to impose on strangers. Amongst the private palaces, those of Hamet Geluli,* and Hagunas, a character equally well known here, are the most conspicuous.

The consular houses, of which there are several, are all, without any exception, solitary habitations, and infinitely more like prisons than the abodes of persons destined to sustain and represent national dignity.

The Moorish houses, like those of Tripoly, seldom exceed one story in height; the roofs are all flat; and large cisterns are attached to them for receiving rain water, which is sometimes acceptable, owing to an occasional scarcity of that article:

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* This man is supposed to be the richest subject in the Regency: the people tell you that he is proprietor of nearly half the kingdom; his situation with the Bey is consequently very precarious; he has, however, contrived to put himself out of his Highness's power, by accepting the place of *embassador* to the Governor of Malta, which office has been lately suspended by an order from the ministry in England; but Geluli is too wise to return, and therefore contents himself with remaining in that island as *commercial agent* to his master. Hagunas was formerly a most opulent man, and very popular with the people: a jealousy that arose between him and Geluli afforded an opportunity to the Bey of interfering; the use made of his power on this occasion will ever be a foul stain on his character; for the poor old man, though seventy years of age, was not only stripped of all his property, but thrown into a lothsome prison at El Bardo, where he now languishes, and is likely to remain all his life.

the city is, however, very well supplied with that necessary from a spring near the town, it being conveyed by a very fine aqueduct, built in Charles the Fifth's time.

The police of Tunis, with respect to personal security, was never so well regulated as it is at present: not later than ten years ago, a Christian could scarcely walk through the streets, much less the country, without being insulted. This very seldom occurs now; and, although the hatred of the natives towards Jews and Christians has not subsided in the least, the fear and certainty of punishment are sufficient bars to their insolence; indeed, his Highness has been the first sovereign who, for many years, dared to punish a Turk with the same impartiality that he would a Moor.]

Besides the mosques, there are a few colleges and schools; it being customary here, as in other parts of Barbary, to instruct all the youth in the rudiments of reading, writing, and a knowledge of the Koran. To describe the manners and customs of the inhabitants would be only a repetition of what has already been said relative to Tripoly.

The number of Christians resident here amount to about fifteen hundred: of these one thousand consider themselves as subjects of France; the rest, with the exception of our Consul, and his suite of three or four individuals, are *ci-devant* inhabitants of Tabarca, that were driven out of that island when the Genoese republic became annexed to France. The number of French sub-

jects in the Regency, together with the facility with which his Highness admits others, may, on some future day, interfere very materially with his interests, if they do not already. This subject has been in vain represented to him, but without effect: it ought, however, to be mentioned, that, until very lately, both he, his minister, and Mr. Mariano the slave, have strenuously opposed the establishment of any British subject here: they have at length changed their tone, from a conviction that our navy can at any time, if vigilantly employed, prevent them from having any communication with the continent of Europe.

All the manufactures known to the people of Tunis are carried on here with great assiduity; they principally consist of the bernouse, baracan, shawls, caps, Morocco leather, oil of roses and of jessamine; embroidery of every kind, fire arms, and sword cutlery. An extensive and lucrative commerce was formerly established between this and the interior, particularly Ghadames and Constantina: caravans went to and from the former twice a year, bringing with them the productions of the Nigritia, and taking back those of Europe; a similar trade was kept up with the latter. The Bey's impolitic mode of governing the Arabs has not only alienated their affections from him, but caused the suspension of this advantageous source of wealth.

When public confidence is once destroyed between the prince and his people, it can only be

restored by a system of conciliation and liberality on the part of the former: this has not as yet been resorted to by his Highness: the evils resulting from a line of policy so inimical to the true interests of his person and government are innumerable.

LETTER II.

Urbs antiqua fuit (Tyrii tenuere coloni)
Carthago, Italiam contra Tiberimque longe
Ostia, dives opum, studiisque asperrima belli:
Quam Juno fertur terris magis omnibus unam
Posthabita coluisse Samo——

VIRG. *Æneid*, lib. i.

Environs of Tunis—Improvements—Religion and Tolerance—Surrounding Landscape and Ruins—Carthage—Historical Notices—Geography of the Sea Coast continued—Produce of the Country—Antiquities—Present Freedom of Research—Animals—Religion—Government—General Character—Liberty—Slavery—State of the Women, &c. &c.

Tunis, 1811.

MANY of the opulent natives, and nearly all the European consuls, have handsome villas and extensive gardens, which are scattered over the country, from Tunis to a delightful spot called La Marza, close to Cape Carthage, and one of the most luxuriant situations in the kingdom: it is much frequented in summer, when the visitors

enjoy the double advantage of exquisite rural recreation and sea-bathing; the number of rose-trees cultivated here would surprize an European; for you meet large tracts of ground covered with them, as frequent as turnip fields in England—a promenade in one of these odoriferous regions is more easily imagined than described.

The soil round Tunis is rather sandy, with a strong loamy bottom: it produces grain, fruit, and vegetables, in the greatest abundance: the soil and climate are admirably adapted for the growth of cotton, sugar, and many tropical productions; even coffee and indigo have been successfully tried: in fact, under any other hands but those which are now destined to be its proprietors, what would it not produce? The breed of cattle, mode of cultivating the ground, and every thing else connected with agriculture, are susceptible of infinite improvement. Bees, of which there are an amazing number, are very much neglected. Upon the commerce of this place it is hardly necessary to add any thing here, that subject being ably elucidated in the publications of Messrs. M'Gill and Jackson.*

* Mr. M'Gill, in his very able work on this Regency, has communicated many interesting facts relative to its politics and commerce. His observations on the defective manner in which the British consular system is conducted cannot be too attentively read by men in power. There are, in fact, so many particulars contained in his little volume, relative to manners, customs, &c. that they have superseded the necessity of my lengthening this sketch of the country to an unnecessary degree. Biscuit baking

It is very singular, that in a country blinded so much by superstition as this is, a spirit of religious toleration should be encouraged, even to a greater extent than at Tripoly: this forms a pleasing contrast with that savage ferocity which usually distinguishes the Tunisian character; and I have been much surprized to find, that, besides the Jewish synagogues, Greek and Roman Catholic chapels are established in the centre of the town.

The precepts of our holy religion, and a thousand other considerations, naturally point out to the Christians resident in Tunis, that a promotion of social virtue, and other acts of mutual benevolence, would be most conducive to the common interest, while it would, at the same time, inspire Mahometans with a proper degree of respect and veneration for a community so infinitely beyond themselves in manners and civilization: but the contrary is, unhappily, the case; and I have often beheld, with surprize, that a system of calumny and slander but too often usurp the place of friendly intercourse and domestic happiness.

You have, doubtless, often heard of the extreme jealousy which forms so striking a feature in the national character of this country; yet prostitu-

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has latterly been brought to an uncommon degree of perfection here, and large quantities are exported, besides what is required to supply the Tunisian squadron. This circumstance might be taken great advantage of by naval and military commanders, on those emergencies which frequently occur in the Mediterraneau.

tion is not only tolerated, but subjected to regulations established by the government; it is, however, altogether confined to the Moors, as if a Christian is found in company with a female of the Mahometan faith, they are both put to death.

To form any idea of the landscape which surrounds Tunis, it is necessary that you should visit the ruins of Carthage. This once celebrated capital of a great country is now only distinguished by its cisterns, the remains of some amphitheatres, and an aqueduct; the whole a melancholy emblem of the instability of human greatness. We cannot, however, help being struck with admiration on a review of the place which was chosen as the site of this city. It was built on a high promontory, forming the western extremity of Tunis Bay, now called Cape Carthage; and, without exception, a more magnificent *coup-d'œil* cannot be conceived, than is presented to the beholder in the scene before him. The eye, wandering over extensive and highly cultivated plains, sometimes interrupted by hills that form a semicircle of more than one hundred miles, is at length gratified by a range of lofty mountains, that bound the horizon on each side. Amongst these, Zowan is the most conspicuous, and celebrated for having supplied Carthage with water: the aqueduct constructed for its conveyance was equal to any of the most stupendous works of antiquity: the remains of it have been traced for seventy miles over a very

irregular and hilly country; indeed, several hundred arches are *still to be seen*. This is an admirable monument of human industry, an equal to which few other countries can boast.

The plain of Zama, remarkable for the sanguinary battle fought there between Hannibal and Scipio Africanus, which decided the fate of Carthage, is seen on the right, and is now covered with corn, and groves of olive trees.

That man who could survey the ruins of Carthage with indifference, or not call to mind the scenes of its past glories and misfortunes, must, indeed, be devoid of sensibility; nor is it possible, in my opinion, to witness such an instance of fallen greatness, without being irresistibly led into a train of reflection, from which an important moral and political lesson may be drawn. Its effect would, however, be transient on an ordinary being: to render the lesson either lasting or useful to mankind, it would be necessary to place the prime minister of a great country on the highest pinnacle of Byrsa; from thence, while admiring the variegated beauties of an enchanting landscape, a natural association of ideas would make him revert to the page of history: there he would see it recorded, that a band of enterprizing Phœnicians, led on by an adventurous female, had, more than two thousand five hundred years before, established a flourishing colony on the very spot upon which he stood, now presenting nothing but a desolate and mingled heap of ruins; that,

by the wisdom of her laws, and honest industry of her people, Carthage shortly rose to a lofty and envied pre-eminence amongst nations; mistress of the ocean, and soul of commerce, her ships covered the sea from the Bosphorus to the Pillars of Hercules. Alas! dissatisfied with legitimate and true greatness, a fatal thirst for foreign conquest infected her rulers; but mark the melancholy result! Commerce was abandoned, fleets and armies sent forth, Sicily, Sardinia, and a part of Spain, soon acknowledged her sway; the jealousy of Rome was rouzed; rivalry ensued; and, after a sanguinary, though unsuccessful, struggle, the Queen of Arts, and pride of civilization, fell at the merciless feet of unpitying conquerors!!! *

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* Here it will not, I hope, be thought superfluous, if I add the opinions of two very celebrated characters upon the other defects which contributed to hasten the fall of Carthage: opinions which carry conviction along with them, but in coming from Polybius and Aristotle, they acquire great additional force.

"Aristotle, among other observations upon the government of Carthage, mentions two glaring defects, which were, according to his opinion, very contrary to the wishes or intentions of a wise legislator, and highly detrimental to sound policy.

"The first of these was the confirming of many places in the same person, which custom he considered as extremely prejudicial to the public good, observing, that when a man has but one employment, he is thereby the better able to execute his duty, being more at liberty to examine the affairs of office, and expedite them with greater celerity. He adds, is it not seen in the field as well as in navigation, one officer does not command two different corps, nor one pilot manage two ships. On the one

Such would probably be the reflections of a statesman, if transported to this awful scene, but how glorious for himself, and useful to his fellow-creatures, if he knew how to turn them to the practical benefit of his country!*

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hand, the good of the state requires an excitement to emulation amongst persons of merit; let favours be equally divided, but when places are multiplied in the same person, a distinction so unjust must ever excite in the community the most lively sentiments of jealousy, envy, and disgust.

"The second defect found in the Carthaginian government by the same author, was, that to attain certain posts, it was not deemed necessary to possess merit, but absolutely so to be blest with interest and fortune; consequently, poverty excluded persons meriting the highest rewards. This was, indeed, a most serious evil; for why should virtue be considered as superfluous, and money estimated beyond every thing else?—Because it served to mislead for private ends: thus the admiration and thirst for riches governed the country, and held the reins of government, corrupting its magistrates and judges, and introducing bribery to obtain honours and places of trust, which, when once possessed, conceiving themselves at liberty to repay the iniquitous sums expended to gain their wishes, they at once gave way to a system of the most shameful corruption."

Polybius has observed, "that no species of gain was considered as dishonourable by the Carthaginians, and that scruples never intervened to check an evil so threatening to the public weal."—Mr. Rollin adds, with his usual simplicity of language, "But how fatal might have been the consequences of such a system!"—*Hist. Ann.* tom. i.

* The following poem, written on the very ruins of Carthage, is the production of a young gentleman, named Budd, who was born in Dublin, and having entered the navy at an early age, visited Tunis in the ship to which he belonged, about five years ago. I regret to add, that he soon after fell a victim to the

Should the political events of Europe, a circumstance by no means impossible, render it necessary for an European army to visit this country on any

yellow fever in the West Indies. The lines submitted here have never been published before; and were given to me by a friend of the deceased, with a request that they might be communicated to the public in the most appropriate manner I could devise: this has been chosen, and it is hoped that their merits will be my best apology, while the memory of a youth, who would doubtless have been an ornament to literature, may be rescued from unmerited oblivion.

I.

Oh thou whose glory filled the prostrate world,
Triumphant mistress of the wat'ry main,
From what a height of glory art thou hurl'd,
How dreary now thy desolated plain!

II.

No more the fleeting downy-footed hours,
With happy speed in tripping time advance;
No longer, rushing from autumnal bow'rs,
The festive pairs describe the mazy dance;

III.

No more the strains which waken soft desire,
Or lull the pangs which they induc'd before,
Shall flow harmonious from the swelling lyre,
Shall charm, or soothe th' enamour'd youth no more.

IV.

Fled is thy grandeur, all thy beauty fled:
Fled all that once could charm the raptur'd eye!
The very cypress, with its gloomy head,
Weary of sorrow, is compelled to die.

future occasion, Carthage presents itself as an excellent place for their reception:—as a military position, it possesses every advantage, and may be considered as unassailable, if properly fortified. The cisterns must certainly have been either within

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V.

In vain thy Phœnicopters* strive to chase,
With gaudy wing, the silent gloom away;
In vain thy lizards run their winding race,
A sadd'ning solitude still clouds the day.

VI.

For Devastation, with despotic arm,
Has swept her chariot o'er thy trampled field;
Her trump re-echoing the dread alarm,
And blazing firebrand has been seen to wield.

VII.

Why does the breast with sudden tumults heave?
Why tremulous respires the bursting sigh?
The heart no longer can refuse to grieve,
Nor echo cease in pity to reply.

VIII.

Here where the sloping hill and verdant plain
Have oft resounded with the sports of May,
Stalks the gaunt lion now, with proud disdain,
And yelping jackalls seek their scanty prey.

* Flamingoes. These birds, whose plumage is so extremely beautiful, are the constant inhabitants of the lake which lies between the ruins of Carthage and Tunis. M. de Chateaubriand speaks of them in the following terms: "Quand ces beaux oiseaux volent à l'encontre du soleil, tendant le cou en avant, et allongeant les pieds en arrière, ils ont l'air de flèches empennées avec des plumes couleur de rose."—*Itinéraire*, tome ii., page 237.

the former citadel, or under its immediate protection; and such is their present state of preservation, that during the winter, they are generally more than half full of good water. The whole promontory is highly cultivated, and produces large crops of wheat. There are also two or three

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IX.

Where cultivation smiled with glowing pride,
Where once the painted bed enamell'd grew,
The flow'rets now, their blushing beauty hide,
Ashamed to shew their variegated hue.

X.

Where once society endearing dwell'd,
And tender friendship harmoniz'd the soul;
No more the bosom is with rapture swell'd,
Nor sighs of plaintive sympathy condole.

XI.

Thus when from scenes which wintry clouds deform,
The sun in haste withdraws his cheering ray,
The trav'ller, darkling, wearied, and forlorn,
Laments the absence of departed day.

XII.

Impell'd by curiosity's command,
A wand'ring youth, and stranger to thy shore,
Is come to view thy melancholy land,
To trace that splendour which invites no more:

XIII.

To mark with pensive retrospective eye,
The wreck of empire, and the dust of state;
Which tell us feelingly that all must die,
The suppliant humble, and the haughty great.

hundred pipes of good wine, made annually in the vicinity of a small town built on the outer part of the Cape. The best materials for throwing up works, are, of course, to be found every where

XIV.

Which sad inculcate, how all human pow'r,
All mortal labour, is but spent in vain,
All doom'd to meet th' inexorable hour
Which unrelenting moulders us again.

XV.

Hark! while with deep solicitude I seek
Some letter'd remnant of illustrious yore,
Loud thund'ring clouds impetuously break,
And driving show'rs forbid me to explore.

XVI.

Unaw'd, amid the tempest's dire alarms,
Thy fair Eliza,* glowing with the chace,
In such a hurricane resign'd her charms
To the lov'd Trojan's† treacherous embrace.

XVII.

That fatal cave, where, uncontroul'd by form,
The fervent vow each feeble plea surpast,
Might now afford me shelter from the storm,
A safe asylum from the howling blast.

XVIII.

But just as fleeting as the summer show'r
Which Sol irruptive on its cloud dispels;
To man's fond promise, oft th' ensuing hour
The tale of sadness to the fair one tells.

* A name of Dido, foundress of Carthage.
† Æneas.

in the greatest abundance. The facility of keeping up a constant communication with the sea, is also another great consideration, and with respect to climate, and purity of atmosphere, Cape Carthage is, I believe, unequalled.

XIX.

Let Contemplation with her silent train
Of swept ideas, present to the call,
And parent Memory, usurp my brain,
Unhappy Byrsa!* while I trace thy fall.

XX.

Perhaps on this same spot where now reclines
A youth to grandeur, and to thee unknown,
Stern Marius† has, contemplating thy crimes,
Compar'd thy just abasement with his own.

XXI.

Perhaps 'twas here the bleeding patriot bore‡
Each horrid pang, each cruelty severe;
Urg'd by the pledge of honor to a shore,
The hapless limit of his great career.

XXII.

The swelling trump of fame, whose notes astound,
Still, with sonorous clangor shall proclaim,
To distant nations, echoing the sound,
Attilius Regulus! thy glorious name.

* Byrsa, the citadel of Carthage, so called from the artifice of the hide.

† Livy, the Roman historian, informs us, that when Marius was forced to fly into Africa, he took up his abode at Carthage, and surveying the surrounding desolation, could not forbear observing a striking similarity in their adverse fortunes.

‡ The celebrated story of Regulus, as related by Valerius Maximus and other historians, is too well known to require a repetition.

It may not be irrelevant to repeat that the heights connected with the Cape, having an entire command of the works at the Goletta and its arsenal, all of these might be destroyed in four hours.

XXIII.

In tracing back the full historic page,
The mind, insulted by atrocious crime,
Indignant rouses, eager to presage
Eternal justice, punishment condign.

XXIV.

Thy story, Carthage, stained with basest guilt,
So flaunts its crimson'd, deeply glowing hue,
Reflection shudders at the blood so spilt,
And pale with horror sickens at the view.

XXV.

Scarce can the deeds of that illustr'ous chief,
Whose potent arm *deferr'd* thy sure decay,
Th' immortal Hannibal (a short relief)
Illume thy page with vivifying ray.

XXVI.

'Twould seem, that varying from her wonted laws
Nature had wander'd, when to thee she bore,
That matchless Hero of a wretched cause,
Whose lustre would have graced a better shore.

XXVII.

Yet long did his exotic bloom remain
Till wearied out, he droop'd with slow decline,
The tufted palm tree which adorns thy plain
Thus fades, if planted in a polar clime.

While so many of our countrymen have been travelling through Sicily and the Morea with such amazing avidity, they have been probably unacquainted with the attractions of this country.

XXVIII.

Nor let his virtues pass in silence by,
Which hostile pens impartially unfold;
Let it be known, that when he deign'd to die,
His breast despis'd the sordid thirst of gold.

XXIX.

Accursed avarice! whose hideous grasp
Excludes each general feeling from the soul:
Avaunt from me, thou fiend! nor dare to clasp
A bosom ignorant of thy controul.

XXX.

Sooner let waste superfluous abound,
And mad extravagance my senses fire;
Than thou venality my peace confound,
With meanness clad and peculation dire.

XXXI.

This was thy crime, this thy destructive vice,
Perfidious Carthage! Avarice was thine;*
Thy present mis'ry never can induce
My muse to yield thee one applauding line.

XXXII.

How vain have proved thy heaps of treasur'd store,
Thy Punic cunning and relentless ire,
When Roman legions shouted on thy shore,
Could they protect thee from avenging fire?

* Has Carthage no parallel in modern times?

The number and magnificence of Roman ruins which exist throughout the Regency, would be a source of amusement and historical enquiry, not unworthy of the most enlightened amongst them; and, to the valetudinarian, perhaps no part of Europe would be so beneficial as the mineral baths of Hamam Leef. These waters were very celebrated in antiquity, and are situated at the declivity of a mountain, close to the sea, at the

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XXXIII.

Just was thy fate, nor let a single sigh
Be heard to echo from thy desert tomb;
Nor the sad wanderer, who loiters by,
Inveigh against thy miserable doom.

XXXIV.

Had virtue dwelt with thee, their eagled host,*
In vain had dar'd to stem the Tuscan tide;†
Freedom had guarded its insulted coast,
And commerce crown'd thee with eternal pride.

The immortal Author of "Jerusalem Delivered" has made a fine and truly philosophic allusion to this place, in his 15th Canto, where the two warriors are dispatched for Rinaldo.

Giace l' alta Cartago, appena i segni
Dell' alte sue ruine il lido serba,
Muojono le citta, muojono i regni;
Copre i fasti e le pompe arena ed erba;
E l' uom d' esser mortal per che si sdegni.
Oh nostra mente cupida e superba!

* The Eagle was the standard of Rome.

† Mare Tyrrhenean, that part of the Mediterranean which separates Italy from Carthage.

southern extremity of the Bay of Tunis; their virtues in the cure of rheumatic, and indeed all chronic disorders, are wonderfully great; I have been assured by medical men established here, that the efficacy of these waters has often been proved. The few English patients who have occasionally visited the place, all concur in bearing testimony to the beauty of its situation, and the benefit they derived from a use of the waters. When more generally known, this place will, I hope, be frequented a little more than it is at present; every comfort of life is found at a most trifling expense, and in the event of being visited by many persons, there would be no difficulty in improving the house already built for their reception. There are, generally, several Tunisian families at Hamam Leef, as the inhabitants ascribe the most miraculous virtues to the spring. It issues from the base of the mountain alluded to; and without scarcely ever varying its heat, is generally equal to 118 degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer. A fine spring of cold fresh water rises within a quarter of a mile east of it; the taste of the mineral is not unlike that of Glauber's salts, but by no means so nauseating; a pint is sufficient to produce an effect, and it frequently operates as a vomit. Taking leave of Tunis, I shall now attempt to describe the coast eastward of Cape Bon.

Galipia, (the Clupea of the Romans,) is the first town you come to, it is fifteen miles from the

Cape, contains about four thousand inhabitants, and is defended by a castle, built on a very strong military position, which commands the beach. The land on this part of the coast is tolerably well cultivated, and produces considerable quantities of corn and oil. The anchorage of Galipia is only sheltered from west and north-west winds. Leaving this town, and passing several inconsiderable villages, you arrive at Hamamett, in the Gulf of that name. This place contains eight thousand inhabitants, and carries on a considerable trade in corn, wool, and oil, with Tunis. The Gulf is but little frequented, and as little known to navigators as any other part of Barbary, not having ever been properly surveyed by an English navigator. The seamen of Tunis say that it abounds in fish of various kind; and they assert, that there are very good anchoring places in several parts of it.

The next town eastward is Susa, famous for its exports of wool and olive oil: the latter is more abundant in the vicinity of this place than in any other part of the Regency, and when properly prepared, is considered as equal to that of Lucca. The inhabitants are computed at eight or ten thousand, and are rather industrious than otherwise. The Bay of Susa is a good summer anchorage, but exposed, during winter, to the north-east gales. With respect to the defences of this town, like all the rest which I have mentioned, they are falling to pieces. The country

about Susa is extremely beautiful and well cultivated. Thirty miles in the interior, at a place called Elgemme, there is a colossal amphitheatre in a very high state of preservation; several fine statues, and other relics of antiquity, have been found near this place.

Twenty miles east of Susa is the populous town of Monasteer; this place carries on a trade similar to that of Susa, and contains a population of nearly twelve thousand souls. The manufacture of coarse cloths and the bernouse is considerable here. The roadstead is more calculated for the reception of shipping than Susa or Sfax, being protected by a long reef of rocks, called the Cogniliri, which protects it from the easterly winds; the position is strong, but very badly fortified. Sfax* is also a town of considerable trade, and contains about six thousand inhabitants. It has a communication with the city of Cairouan, already mentioned, and as at the two above-named places, a commercial intercourse is carried on with Malta. I omitted to mention the town of Africa, which is half way between Sfax and Susa; and a place of considerable opulence: indeed, the whole of this coast is covered with towns and villages, and presents to the traveller a scene of considerable animation.

The Gulf of Cabes, or Syrtis Minor of anti-

* The best soap is made here, and Pistachio nuts of a superior quality are abundant.

quity, appears to be as little known to the navigators of this country and to ourselves, as that of Hamamett. Commencing at Sfax, it forms a semicircle eighty miles in extent, having a number of towns, of which Cabes is the principal. This place contains at least thirty thousand souls, and the mountains in its vicinity are famous for the warlike and ferocious disposition of the inhabitants. It is said that the Sheik of this province can bring into the field twenty thousand cavalry; horses being very numerous, and of a superior quality. The commerce of Cabes with Cairouan and Tunis is very considerable.

The island of Jerbi, which forms the eastern boundary of the Regency of Tunis, is only separated from the continent by a narrow channel, not navigable. The inhabitants, amounting to more than thirty thousand, are considered as by far the most industrious and well disposed under his Highness's government. The manufactures of shawls, linen, and woollen cloths, have prospered here uncommonly, and are generally esteemed as the best in all Barbary. Its communication with the interior has also added much to its opulence. Jerbi has long been a bone of contention between Algiers and Tunis; the attack made by the squadron of the former state, in May last, would have most probably succeeded, had not the Tunisian squadron come to its relief. The naval contest to which that rencontre gave rise, having ended in the total discomfiture of the latter, and

the death of their best admiral, the Bey, consistent with his usual policy, has now given orders to fortify the town, which was before left in a very defenceless state; but, it is much doubted, whether their works are likely to insure its future security. Large quantities of live stock are occasionally sent to Malta from this island, together with several other articles of commerce. The anchorage of Jerbi is very good during the summer, but exposed in the winter months.

I have now to notice a small group of islands called the Querquini: they lay between Sfax and Monasteer, and are separated from the main land by a channel three miles wide, navigable for large merchant vessels. The reason for mentioning these islands, more particularly than I should otherwise have done, arises from a hope that they may be, on some future day, rendered eminently useful to Sicily and Malta. There is a large bank extending from them to Lampadosa, which abounds in fish of every kind; and this may at any time be converted into a most profitable and productive fishery. The island of Lampadosa from its proximity to Malta, would be a very convenient rendezvous for the boats employed on this undertaking, and no difficulty whatever will attend the obtaining necessary licenses from the Bey of Tunis. The monopoly, scarcity, and numerous frauds, to which the markets of Sicily and Malta have long been exposed, are well known sources of complaint, and must sooner or

later render a recourse to the above place a most desirable, and, perhaps, necessary measure. The utility of such an establishment scarcely requires an argument: the population of your island, from many causes, is increasing daily; and the large demands continually made by the army and navy, together with the immense influx of strangers, are subjects which require serious consideration: would it not, therefore, be wise and salutary to recommend, and even encourage, an undertaking, which, while it increased the public comfort, and gave a stimulus to industry, would most materially diminish the price of animal food? The expense attending a fishery of this nature, cannot operate as an obstruction to its establishment, as the returns will be immediate and successive; nor can I entertain a doubt, but that there are persons in Malta, who would most willingly advance the necessary sums.* As to Lampadosa, it possesses all the advantages requisite to make it a safe and commodious rendezvous for the fishery: and on the Querquini, an asylum could be insured in the event of bad weather. A more minute description of the above named island will be found in its proper place.†

* Messrs. J. Hunter, Landers, and some others, have already offered to advance money in this undertaking; but want of encouragement from a higher authority, has prevented any decisive steps being taken.

† Vide account of Sicily.

In a former part of these letters I mentioned the impossibility of forming a correct estimate of the population of the Regency, but those who have indulged in any speculation as to the probable extent of population, usually estimate it at between four and five millions: the impossibility of making an exact enumeration renders this a matter of pure conjecture, for it may be much more, and perhaps even less; the wandering disposition of the Arabs, and secluded manner of living prescribed to other people, render it even difficult for Europeans to form a correct opinion of what number of souls the different towns contain. As in Tripoly, the inhabitants of Tunis consist of Moors, Turks, Arabs, and Jews: of these, the Moors and Arabs, form the great bulk of the nation, while the other two classes are comparatively trifling. It is important to observe that a settled hatred exists all over Barbary between the Arab tribes, and Moors who govern; in fact, their interests are in the greatest opposition to each other,—and the former, considering themselves as the natural proprietors of the soil, and stung by the many cruelties committed on them, would gladly embrace the cause of any foreign power, which might be disposed to offer them a preponderance of which they are now deprived. These poor people, even in their present oppressed condition, entertain a strong love of liberty; their hospitality is proverbial, both to each other and to Christians of every description who go amongst

them. I have also been frequently surprized to find that they make a striking distinction between the national character of the French and ourselves: esteeming the former as enemies, while, on the contrary, the name of an Englishman is always hailed with the utmost respect. The Arabs have no idea of superiority in any other European nations. Their arms, dress, and other customs differ very little from those of Tripoly and Algiers.

The animal and vegetable tribes, throughout Africa, are but very insufficiently described by European naturalists; and I have no doubt that considerable discoveries will yet be made here in these important branches of science. It is rather singular that we should be so generally unacquainted with the horse of the desert: the attributes of this animal are noticed at length in Mr. Jackson's Travels. The circumstances he relates, although so very extraordinary, have been in part confirmed to myself, as I have, since the perusal of his remarks, made numerous inquiries upon the subject, and been informed that there is actually, in the country of Dates, a race of horses, whose swiftness and rapidity of travelling, nearly equal that which he describes. A man of the first rank in Tunis has assured me, that a journey performed in three days by one of the above animals, was only gone through in eight by one of the common Tunisian breed.

The camel is also endowed with extraordinary qualities; its sagacity, strength, and capacity of ab-

staining from water for so long a time* would, doubtless, make this animal a most useful acquisition in many countries of Europe: when occasionally transported, it has been found to answer the most useful purposes, particularly at Malta, where there are several employed at the corn mills.

The dromedary is very rarely seen at Tunis, nor do I believe there are any great number in the Regency, being confined principally to the country of Dates. This is, indeed, a most extraordinary animal, in point of swiftness, and said even to exceed the horse of the desert. Such is their amazing velocity, when directed by a good Arab rider, that the swiftest horse cannot keep pace with them for half an hour. Although the story of their continuing in a state of apparent insensibility for several days after their birth, is not generally credited in Europe, the singular fact has been mentioned to me repeatedly here. When that torpor lasts ten days, their value is thereby enhanced, and they are called, Aâshâri, signifying ten. When travelling in the desert, the Arabs positively assert that an Aâshâri will continue in a hard trot for the space of twenty-four hours without requiring the smallest sustenance.

The almost innumerable and splendid remains of antiquity scattered throughout the kingdom, sufficiently attest the immense population of this state while colonized by Rome. It is universally

* Six weeks, and sometimes three months.

allowed, that not more than one-fifth remains at the present day, and such are the laws and institution of the government, that it is daily diminishing, without the smallest probability of a favourable change.

The prejudices hitherto entertained by these people against the discovery or preservation of antique gems and statues have subsided very much on the part of government; indeed, the Bedouins having discovered that Europeans buy such things with avidity, never lose any opportunity of conveying whatever they find, secretly to Tunis, for the purpose of making a bargain with some of the consuls; in this way several very respectable collections of medals, gems, bronzes, and marbles, have already been formed here, besides many fine specimens sent to France, where things of that description are infinitely more appreciated than in any other part of the world. But the most important discovery made in this country, was, a few years ago, amongst the ruins of Utica, where some labourers, in digging up a quantity of stones for completing the works of the Goletta, found a number of beautiful statues, some mutilated, and others in the highest state of preservation; of the latter I observed a remarkably fine colossal whole length of Tiberius, another of Augustus not quite so well preserved, and the bodies of four female figures, two of which are exquisite specimens of Grecian sculpture. The Tiberius is a highly interesting statue, both on account of its preserva-

tion and fine style of execution. These reliques, strange as it may appear, have been in possession of the minister of the marine, Mohammed Coggia, for nearly three years, without any effort being made to rescue them from such a place, until very lately, when Mr. Fagan, our consul general at Palermo, and a steady friend of the arts, has attempted to purchase them. Should another proposition of that gentleman be acceded to, antiquarians will, at some future period, be gratified with many of the hidden treasures of Africa. This relates to the permission to excavate, which the Bey will grant, if the request is made by his Majesty's government; and such an object is certainly not unworthy their attention: indeed many people, well acquainted with this country, have often told me, that if due encouragement was given to the researches for antiquities in Africa, a collection equal to any in Europe might soon be accumulated, and the prejudice of the Moors, of whatever description, be then almost vanquished by a seasonable bribe.*

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* I took occasion to quote one or two passages from Mr. Bruce's Travels in the letter on Tripoly, I now take the liberty of transcribing another, explanatory of his erratic labours in this part of Barbary.

"It is now time to mention how that space has been employed, and whether my expectations have been answered by the antiquities I have found in my journey. The principal are these: eight triumphal arches of the Corinthian order in great preservation, all highly ornamented, and of the very best ages, whose plans, parts, and decorations, I have, by very laborious searches

In a country teeming with every blessing which Providence can bestow to promote the happiness of society, it is truly melancholy to reflect, that the caprice and ignorance of a few continue to keep it in such a state of degradation, and, if ever the arm of conquest could be justified, or usefully exerted, it would surely be in the regeneration of such a people.

The religion established throughout the Regency is of course Mahometanism, but attended by that bigotry and irrational prejudice of which it is susceptible.* An unqualified hatred of Chris-

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and excavations, made myself entirely master of; add to these one large temple of the Composite order, in its best age, one part of which is so perfectly preserved, that it must be looked upon as an unexceptionable example of the manner in which the ancients disposed and proportioned the constituent parts of that order; and two large aqueducts, the smallest of which exceeds, by forty-two feet in perpendicular height, the remains of the highest aqueduct in Rome. In these designs are included the ruins of the three principal cities in Africa; namely, Jol, or Julia Cæsarea, the capital of Juba, Cirta and Carthage, the last of which I hope, will be found to make a better figure than it does in the account of some travellers, who would persuade us that there are no traces of that city remaining."

I trust this celebrated traveller's drawings will ere long be taken from the unmerited obscurity in which they have remained, and be given to the public, which cannot but be gratified at their inspection.

* One of the most curious instances of superstition prevalent in Barbary, is the shutting the gates of all their towns, for the space of an hour at noon on every Sunday; the only reason I have been enabled to learn for this singular practice is, that a

tians, notwithstanding the tolerance noticed, a contempt for the arts and sciences, together with an apparent determination to reject future advancement towards civilization, are the principles inculcated by this destructive profession of faith.

The aversion of these people towards Europeans is indeed carried to a most ridiculous pitch of affectation, particularly in the studious way they endeavour to avoid any of our habits, manners, or customs. Although this subject may have already been noticed, perhaps a short sketch of these singularities will not be unacceptable in this place. Mahometans sit, eat, and sleep on the ground: glasses, plates, knives, forks, spoons, and all the other apparatus of an European table are unknown amongst them; they eat with their fingers, and never have more than one dish set before them at a time: water and coffee ought, according to the prescribed rule, to be their only beverage; the latter is drank almost in a boiling state very strong and without sugar; they write from right to left, and mount their horses on the right; and their bridles, saddles, spurs, and method of sitting on horseback, are altogether different from

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celebrated Mahometan saint is known to have once prophesied that the country would be conquered at the above hour, and on the sabbath day: it was added, that the conquerors would be clothed in red, from which we may conclude that we are destined to become the future masters of Africa, while others are of a different opinion, and firmly believe that the French were meant by the Prophet.

ours. Their mode of dress, partiality to long beards, shaving the head and keeping it always covered, are well known; and their brutal caprice with regard to the women is still more singular, without enumerating the style of architecture, furniture, and various other circumstances in which they differ so widely from Christians. Deprived of theatres, balls, and private parties, their chief occupations are those of eating, smoaking, and sleeping: they never walk except from necessity, probably, because, like us, they are obliged to do so on their feet. It will doubtless be a long time and attended with some difficulty before so large a portion of the species are induced to adopt more rational customs; but it would be melancholy indeed to relinquish the hope, that civilization will at some future period of the world, reach this country also, and triumph over ignorance and barbarism.

With respect to the government, it is despotism, of the worst sort, and in the hands, generally, of persons who make the most improper uses of their power; consequently, we need not be surprized if patriotism and regard for the country should be totally extinguished. Indeed, the only ties which bind the subject here, are those which naturally attach him to his family and friends.

In drawing the general character of his Highness's subjects, little remains to be said. The religious, civil, and political institutions of his

country, oppress the Tunisian's mind, and influence his general conduct so powerfully, that he can only be considered as a slave, subject to the will of many tyrannical masters. If a change, calculated to enlighten and give the blessings of liberty to them should ever take place, we shall then, doubtless, have occasion to admire the physical and moral attributes of these people as much as those of other countries where these advantages are enjoyed. An abstemious mode of living, and the enjoyment of the finest climate on earth, have endowed the natives with an athletic and hardy constitution; they live to a great age, and the bodily evils under which they now suffer, arise most frequently from habitual indolence, and improper treatment of diseases. The latter science is perhaps less known in Barbary than any other part of the world; a hot iron, as at Tripoly, applied to different parts of the body, is considered as the sovereign remedy in every indisposition; of anatomy, as a science, they are totally ignorant.

It would be an injustice were I to pass over, in silence, that sex which, in every country forms the delight and happiness of society; for nothing can be more truly deplorable or likely to excite the sympathy of an European, than the unhappy state of servitude to which the women are reduced here, excluded from social intercourse with the world, and their nearest relatives, never permitted to appear in public, and continually subject to the

brutal jealousy of a capricious husband. These are but a few of the miseries which attend the life of these unfortunate victims.

I have every reason to believe that they are not deficient either in personal charms, or in a most pleasing simplicity of manner, which all the trammels of their education have not eradicated: it is also well ascertained that their dislike towards Christians is by no means so rooted as might naturally be expected from the precepts and example engendered by education.

In fact, women are in this country considered merely as beings necessary for the gratification of sensual appetite; at all other times they are treated with marked contempt and neglect. A young Turkish merchant, established here, was some time ago married to a Georgian slave of exquisite beauty, who shortly after became dangerously ill: a Christian slave residing in the house, having a slight knowledge of medicine, represented to the husband that, in order to save her life, it would be absolutely necessary to bleed her, and apply other remedies; this made no impression whatever on the obdurate Mussulman; on the contrary, he exclaimed, if so, let the wretch die! *Si cosi è lasù la crepare:* this was communicated by the slave himself now in Tunis. One may easily conceive the feelings of those Moorish ladies who possess any degree of sense, doomed to live in a seraglio, and forced to share their owner's favors with two or three legitimate rivals, an indefinite number of

white and black slaves, besides very frequently three or four minions.

I feel happy in having this opportunity of observing, that wherever my profession has hitherto led me, I have found, amongst the most degenerate nations, a superiority of character and justness of thinking, in the women, which have excited my surprize and admiration.

Spain, Italy, and many states about the Mediterranean, afford striking examples of this fact.

LETTER VIII.

Let barbarous nations, whose inhuman love
Is wild desire, fierce as the suns they feel;
Let Eastern tyrants, from the light of Heaven
Seclude their bosom slaves. Meanly possessed
Of a mere lifeless, violated form——
——————in eternal care
Well merited, consume their nights and days."—THOMSON.

Military and Naval Force—Commerce with France and French Influence—Jews—Piracies on the Mediterranean States—British Policy respecting them—Mahometan Prejudices—State of Slavery at Tunis, particularly of the Fair Sex—Interesting Anecdote on that Subject—European Settlers at Tunis—Further Remarks, &c. &c. &c.

Tunis, 1811.

TURNING from the subject in my last letter, upon which nothing very agreeable can be said,

although I shall have to give it further notice, I shall devote a few lines in this one to the recital of his Highness's naval and military power. His squadron is at present composed of nine xebecks, equal to our sloops of war; these vessels, without being coppered, and most miserably equipped, will probably fall a prey to the Algerines on their next meeting; a few rotten galleys, and about fifteen old gun boats are scarcely worth mentioning; when I add to the above sketch, that his Highness is absolutely without seamen, an admiral or commanders, no very respectable idea can be formed of his naval prowess.*

* Too much cannot be said on the importance of preventing the powers of Barbary from attaining that degree of naval superiority, which might render them more injurious than they already are, to the commercial interests of civilized countries. The Algerines, by far the most overbearing and ferocious of these barbarians, give daily proofs of their contempt of treaties, and determination to insult the British nation: this could not be more fully exemplified than in a late instance.

His Majesty's brig Haughty, commanded by Lieut. Hervey, in coming out of Tunis with a convoy of merchant vessels, chiefly laden with grain for the supply of our garrisons in Malta and Sicily, met with their squadron off Cape Bon, and was brought to by the commodore, who said he was blockading the port, and could not let the English vessels pass without their being carefully examined, although, by a previous arrangement, it was settled, that all of our convoys should have free ingress and egress at the above place. On making the necessary inquiries, the Algerine found that some of the vessels were not manned with English subjects, though they had regular papers and the flag, he therefore insisted on detaining them; this was warmly opposed

In cases of emergency, from thirty to forty thousand infantry have been collected together under his Highness's banners; and the cavalry have sometimes amounted to about fifteen thousand. The above is certainly but a very trifling proportion, when the population of the Regency is considered; but here, as every where else, what is the use of numbers if they are not animated by the *amor patriæ*, and an attachment to the government? This has been more than once fully exemplified in this country. The Bey, during one of his late campaigns, marched a large force towards Algiers, and while daily anticipating an account of some great victory over his rival, a courier arrived with the unexpected intelligence that the Tunisian Commander-in-chief had de-

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by the British commander, who went on board and remonstrated with the Turks on the impropriety of their intentions; upon which he was knocked down, and after being most violently beaten, saved his life with the utmost difficulty by taking to his boat, and, on getting on board his vessel, was glad to bear away for Malta, to avoid the further consequences of remaining amongst the Algerines.

How this gross affront to His Britannic Majesty has been expiated, I know not; and am equally ignorant of the steps taken on the occasion by our present Commander-in-chief; but if it had been possible to have recalled the shades of Blake or Nelson, I am satisfied what the result would have been. Should the British ministry ever resolve on annihilating the naval power of Algiers, guided as it has ever been by no principle of civil or political right, a number of very respectable frigates may be added to our navy.

camped during the night, taking with him a great part of the army, and put himself under the protection of the Dey of Algiers. In fact, it may be said of his Highness the Bey of Tunis, that he has ships without seamen, and an army without discipline, or a chief to command it. The merchant vessels may be limited to thirty, from one to three hundred tons. The coasting trade is all carried on by small vessels called sandals, which never exceed forty tons burden.

A very lucrative and extensive commerce has, during the present war, been established between this Regency and France. In return for the staple commodities of the country, the latter has exported immense quantities of the following articles, viz. silks of every quality and colour, cloths, velvets, lace and threads, watches and jewellery of all kinds, sword blades, linens, cambrics, and a variety of other things. The above imports from France have invariably, after every expense was paid, yielded a profit of sixty per cent. on the original cost. The vigilance of our cruizers has harassed this commerce in a considerable degree, and many other causes of a different nature have now reduced it very low. Amongst these, I consider one to arise from the Bey's having at length discovered that a friendly or commercial intercourse with Buonaparte can be productive of little more than ruin and disappointment. The mercantile interest of England, but more particularly of Malta, have a right to congratulate themselves

upon this change; and the effects which may be expected have already began to operate, by an extension of trade with the latter place. It will, doubtless, be properly encouraged by the Governor of your island; without which, people will not embark in it.

The influence of our enemies, and their scandalous intrigues throughout this Regency, have long been subjects of just reprehension to those who have witnessed and experienced their bad effects. French emissaries, well acquainted with the weaknesses and vices of his Highness, together with the pliancy and ignorance of those who surround him, have, by a system of espionage and bribery, commanded all the resources and advantages to be derived from the Regency. The breaches of neutrality committed by enemy's vessels on the coast of Tunis; their having, in many instances, been permitted to equip and arm in its ports; together with the privilege of condemning, and then selling, British vessels, are violations which demand strict inquiry, and deserve punishment.

Admiral Blake convinced these people of what a British naval force can perform, when properly conducted. He appeared off the port of Farina; and while his ships battered the town, boats manned and armed destroyed every vessel in the harbour. From thence he went to Tripoly, where the terror of his name obtained the most favorable concessions; and the gallant admiral returning to

Tunis, proposed his own terms, which were speedily acceded to.

The aiders and abettors of French influence deserve to be noticed. The first of these is the present prime minister (or Zapatapa, literally, privy seal). Being the principal merchant in the kingdom, it was natural enough that he should attach himself to the agents and views of that nation; and his coadjutor has been Mr. Mariano Stinea,* the Bey's favorite slave. The history of

* The Zapatapa, and Mariano his private secretary, the former a Georgian, and the latter a Neapolitan slave, have, for many years, enjoyed an equal share in the Bey's confidence, and are his principal favorites; they are, consequently, the two first men in power and riches at Tunis. Although possessing equal influence in the state, these two persons are declared enemies; which they are encouraged to continue by the Bey. Their fortunes are immense, and by sharing it à propos with his Highness, and repeating daily that the whole is at his disposal, they have contrived, notwithstanding the series of cruelties and oppressions which have marked their progress to wealth, to secure not only his forgiveness, but support. The principal trade of Tunis is monopolized by those vultures, whose authority is never to be disputed. One instance which occurred here lately, may serve to give some idea of their iniquitous proceedings.

It is an established custom, that whenever a prize is sold by auction, government takes a preference on the last bidder, these are previously informed of the price they are to offer, and none can dare to exceed the sum prescribed. When the Ocean, an English ship, illegally condemned and sold here a few months ago, and worth £80,000 sterling, was put up, the Zapatapa bought both hull and cargo, they being knocked down to him at his own price, £13,500! But his *Excellency* never paid more than two-thirds of that sum to the captors. When in possession

these two persons is the subject of universal execration in Tunis; and their co-operation in a system of oppression, monopoly, and low intrigue, conducted for many years, is too well known to require any illustration of mine. Many others might be added to the list; but you need not be surprized if those who occupy the first stations in the government are imitated by many persons of respectability and property. In dismissing the matters which are more immediately connected with commerce, I ought, perhaps, to say a few words relative to the community of Jews who reside in the Regency. It is said, that their numbers exceed one hundred thousand; they have, as usual, taken possession of all the avenues which lead to opulence; and in the pursuit of riches, no man on earth shews a spirit of more persevering industry than a Barbary Jew: they are, however, extremely useful to his Highness, as they occasionally serve him as the objects of profit and

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of his bargain, a difficulty arose as to the manner of disposing of it; for as the cargo consisted of superfine cloths, Manchester goods, &c. it could not be sent to France; in Malta, its unjust condemnation would have excited litigation; an expedient was, however, soon invented, which, although not the most equitable, answered the minister's purpose. Ordering a list of all the shopkeepers in Tunis to be brought to him, with an account of their supposed property, he distributed to each a certain proportion of the goods, fixing, as usual, his own price, and only granting them the singular indulgence of two and four months credit! It would be difficult, under such a commercial system, for any person to succeed in this Regency.

of persecution. I am totally unacquainted with their social virtues; and only know, that the attachments formed by this persecuted race in Barbary, generally originate in views of self interest, and pecuniary gain; in a political point of view, it would therefore be unsafe, if not highly dangerous,* to place any confidence in them.

Having gone thus far, I have now to solicit your attention to a subject which has long appeared to me, as being of the first importance. I am the more anxious to give it this publicity, as I trust and hope the remedy for so great an evil will ultimately emanate from the British government. You are doubtless well acquainted with the almost uninterrupted system of warfare, which so long existed between the powers of Barbary and the smaller states of Italy. We owe the origin and continuation of this degrading species of hostility to the Crusades. The fanaticism and mistaken zeal which prompted these disastrous expeditions, have long been exploded by men of sense, and excited deserved sentiments of pity and disapprobation amongst the learned: however, like all other religious prejudices, they have left a deep rooted impression upon a vulgar and uneducated populace throughout Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia. This has, but too often, extended to the higher ranks of society, who have never considered the

* The Jew broker, attached to the respective consuls in all these states, is invariably a spy to any other who will pay him.

dreadful consequences which attend the thousands of unfortunate beings who have fallen a sacrifice to their enemies. Viewed politically, this subject is of infinite importance, and in the present state of Europe, I presume no person will deny, that a reconciliation and bond of union, firmly established amongst all the powers in the Mediterranean allied to England, would not only very considerably add to her power, but diminish that of the enemy; on the other hand, can we consider for a moment, that a system of warfare, conducted without any regard to the laws of nations or rules of civilized society, that has principally for its object the slavery and persecutions of christians, is any thing but a type of the policy which was practised in the days of religious enthusiasm, when the true interests of states were unknown to those who governed them? It has, therefore, latterly become a source of general astonishment, that no measures have been taken to reconcile the interests of these powers: they are already so exhausted, either by the corruptions of the governments, or suspension of national industry, that it is with the utmost difficulty they sustain a name among the nations of Europe; yet, by an unheard of fatality, and misapplication of their resources, they attempt to conduct an offensive war against the very neighbours, whose friendship nature has told them to cultivate. A line of policy, so truly ridiculous, or so calculated to exemplify the weakness of human nature, it

would be difficult to imagine. Many facts which have lately come under my own observation, convinced me that some of the powers alluded to have recognized the errors of the past, and only wait for the mediation of Great Britain. Should it be consistent with the policy of ministers, that will, I trust, ere long be effectually interposed.

Amidst a variety of considerations which deeply interest the happiness of these powers, one circumstance is paramount to all others, and most powerfully claims the exertions of a Briton, while it excites his sympathy and commiseration: I allude to the unhappy condition to which the slaves, who are at present in the respective regencies, have long been reduced. It would indeed require a pen, far more energetic than mine, to paint the horrors of their situation, or the extent of their sufferings; but in recapitulating a few facts, you will be enabled to form a faint idea of them. The number at this moment in Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoly, exceeds one thousand, amongst these, a fourth are females.

The Mahometan, from religion, education, and precepts, is taught to detest the name of a Christian; what, therefore, must be the melancholy fate of those of our fellow-creatures, who for ever become the personal property of such people, but that their life is a continued scene of the most poignant sorrow and misery? The eloquence of a British senate has often been successfully exerted

in the cause of suffering humanity, and it is, I hope, reserved for the liberality and benevolence of a British administration, for ever to put an end to a system which militates so much against the interests, duty, and happiness of mankind.

As a specimen of the treatment to which the unfortunate slaves now at this town are subject, I shall select sixty men who are employed in the immediate service of his Highness, upon some public works near the city: during summer and winter they rise at day-break, and work till dark; their daily allowance consists of the following—two small rolls of literally black bread, and six grains of copper (equal to a penny, English), the latter to find them in clothes throughout the year; a monthly ration of wheat and oil is added to the above; of the former about two gallons, and three pints of the latter; so that it will not be difficult to conceive, from this statement, that these emblems of distress are generally half naked. Two keepers, armed with bludgeons, are their constant attendants, and I assert it as a positive fact, that the most severe corporal punishment is continually ordered to be inflicted, without discrimination, on the commission of any crime to merit it. The bastinado, a punishment well known in these countries, can seldom be avoided by any of the Bey's (or his minister's) slaves for more than a week; and from the numerous testimonies which I have received, I have now concluded, that the cruelty practised

towards christians, is considered by the Moors as a religious duty.* Such being the male captives'

* It was only very lately, and by mere accident, that I understood there are in London two separate funds; one under the direction of Ironmongers' Hall, and the other in the Recorder's hands, for the redemption of British subjects taken in slavery. If we may judge from the few natives of England, who have experienced that melancholy fate, during the last fifty years, it is natural to suppose that the capital in the possession of the above, must have, ere this, been considerably increased: if so, and they were disposed to extend their benevolence, there are an infinity of occasions upon which a part of these pious funds might be usefully and benevolently appropriated to the relief of suffering humanity.

It frequently happens at all the ports in Barbary, particularly during wartime, that British vessels are taken by the enemy, and, together with their crews, brought into the ports of Tunis or Algiers, where the latter are consigned to the consul to be sent home; this generally takes place after they have been plundered of all their wearing apparel, and many reduced to sickness from the severity of their usage, &c.: others shipwrecked on the coast, are not always made slaves of; indeed, this never happens, except when the inhabitants are not reduced to submission by the Beys; in the former case they find their way to the first consulate, where it invariably happens, that the means allowed by government, only 9*d.* per day for each man's subsistence, are entirely inadequate to the supply of their wants or restoration to health. On such occasions, for they are very frequent, I would propose with the utmost submission, that the Ironmongers' Company and Recorder shall allow a daily stipend to these objects of well merited charity, in doing which, they will often have the satisfaction to reflect, that if the objects of their benevolence are not rescued from slavery, they will be in many instances snatched from an evil nearly as bad, that of death; so often the consequence of want and unattended disease in

situation, let us turn to the fate of that sex which has a still more powerful claim upon our sympathy and feelings. Those at Tunis, are supposed to be about two hundred; and no language can certainly equal a description of the melancholy and heart-rending situation to which they are reduced. I am convinced that a recital of the facts I am acquainted with, would be too much for the feelings of an English reader; justice, however, demands, that this subject should be amply elucidated, and if any thing can serve to illustrate the character and inexorable qualities, so conspicuous in the

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these countries. The only instance that lately occurred of any of our countrymen having been relieved from bondage in this part of Africa, was in a territory of Algiers, called Gigiri, the inhabitants of which continue in a state of the utmost ignorance and barbarity and entirely uncontrouled by the Dey. An English vessel happened to be wrecked in this quarter, in 1807, and the crew, consisting of sixteen persons, were immediately carried up the country, where they were sold to different masters, and devoted to the most severe labour; nor was it in their power to communicate with our consul-general at Algiers, for several months: when that took place, Mr. Blankley, with the zeal and humanity for which he is so eminently distinguished, instantly applied for their liberation, and obtained it for a very trifling consideration, which he first paid out of his own pocket, and then applied to the funds in England: to the Recorder his application was in vain, but the Ironmongers' Company, with a liberality only known to British corporate bodies, paid immediate attention to the Consul's demand, and in a letter, every line of which breathed sentiments of humanity, thanked him for his conduct, and proffered future aid whenever it should be rendered necessary.

Tunisian, it is in their persecutions and cruelties towards a sex which one would be inclined to think likely to excite some small degree of pity.

It has ever been the practice, on the arrival of any female slaves in the Regency of Tunis, that they should first be subject to a minute examination by the Bey, who has the privilege of appropriating any, which merit his Highness's approbation, to the seraglio. When this choice takes place, their fate becomes truly deplorable; if not endowed with the most prepossessing qualities, they are subjected to every species of oppression and severity from the Moorish women; and a determination to force a change of religion is amongst the least of the cruelties attendant on their situation.

Amidst innumerable facts which I should blush to repeat, it is necessary that one, which has lately occurred, should be communicated to government.—A young woman, who had attracted the notice of his Highness, was conveyed to the palace; and having, with a virtuous determination, resisted every attempt made on her faith, as also other acts of violence, she excited the Bey's displeasure, and the manner of gratifying his revenge was as follows:—the unhappy victim was seized, and secured with cords to a pillar, remaining in that situation for three days, during which time every effort was used, on the part of her malignant persecutors, to accomplish their object: her virtue triumphed, and she was at length dismissed, hav-

ing, in the above short period, received one thousand bastinadoes!—Such were the fortitude, and religious resignation which animated this unfortunate girl, that she did not complain, nor even make the circumstance known to a near relative, who is also in slavery.

The circumstance was communicated to me by an old Sicilian slave, who has been many years in captivity; and it would be difficult to describe his feelings, while relating to me this most execrable deed. The poor old man, in concluding, burst into tears; and, falling upon his knees, called upon God and the British nation to mitigate the wretched situation of his suffering countrymen.

The above may be considered as an exact picture of the horrors to which female slavery is exposed throughout the regencies of Tunis and Algiers.*

A Moor, named Hajunis, lately spoliated of nearly all his property by the Bey, had a whole family, natives of Pantalaria, in his service, having originally bought them at a very high price. They were not taken away from him in the general wreck of his fortunes: this family has been thirteen years at Tunis; and, when first taken from their native home, consisted of the father, mother, and five children, two males and three females; a boy and a girl have died since their captivity.

* At Tripoly there are no female slaves.

The father has often assured me that the death of his son was occasioned by the excessive cruelty he experienced for many causes, but more particularly for his refusal of embracing Mahometanism. This was so insisted on by his master, that it was only left for him to choose between death and apostacy: the youth virtuously preferred the former, and has added one more to the many who have, in this country, fallen a sacrifice to persecution. The disconsolate parents continue, with the remainder of the family, to suffer all the horrors of their situation. They have two daughters, between eighteen and twenty-one years of age. The appearance and amiable simplicity of these victims of misfortune is extremely interesting; the youngest, from her personal beauty, has been destined to go through the various trials of misery peculiar to the rest of her sex in Tunis; she has, for the last six years, in opposition to continued corporal punishment, chains, and imprisonment, supported the dignity of Christianity in an extraordinary degree, shewing to her fellow-sufferers a greatness of soul, as admirable in itself as it is honourable to her own character.

The following adventure actually occurred here; and I give it in the words of the hero himself who performed the action, so worthy of an Englishman. With the friends of humanity, it is unnecessary to make any excuse for an act which was, according to the benevolent custom of people here, construed into one of delinquency, *because the*

treaty was said to be infringed upon. It would be well for the interests of nations, if treaties were never violated, or engagements broken, except to serve the cause of suffering humanity!—If you derive any pleasure from the perusal of this fact, it must be heightened when I add, that the person who rescued poor Lorenza is the officer who had distinguished himself in the revolution just before, and is already mentioned. His narrative is simply as follows:—"This luckless girl, whose name is Lorenza Lena, had been a slave for something longer than seven years; and during that time was bought and sold by different persons, until at length she became the property of her late proprietor, Sidi Mahomet Bencid, a monster of the most refined cruelty, and a perfect demon in the diabolical and nefarious indulgence of a *well-known Moorish appetite.* A short time ago, this worthy subject thought proper to inflict a punishment on this very girl, of the moderate number of one thousand bastinadoes!—and for three months she was obliged to endure all the pains of hunger and thirst, being limited to the daily allowance of a handful of corn, some roots, and about two gills of water. Still her mind was superior to torments almost indescribable; she survived her misery, and the lascivious beast was foiled in his purpose. This, Sir, may serve as a kind of key to the other parts of her misery; but you yourself know too well the indescribable wretchedness of female slavery. However, in the course of conversation,

she told me her determination to put an end to her existence sooner than return to the villain's habitation. I endeavoured to dissuade her from a resolution so sanguinary; but as I wished to speak, my tongue was silent. I demanded in what manner she had obtained permission to go abroad; she told me, that for a year she had solicited the favour, and at length the brute consented, with a growling observation, that he wished she would contrive the means of raising a very moderate ransom, and take herself away from his service, as he did not wish to keep such as her.

" I was conjured, as a British officer, to assist a suffering woman: my feelings were rouzed; my country's pride took the alarm; and that moment I vowed to rescue her, or shed my last drop of blood in the attempt. No time was to be lost; night approached, and at seven the gates of the city would inevitably be shut; accordingly my measures were instantly taken; I consulted with our surgeon, Mr. Gallogby, who gallantly declared his readiness to assist me; in short, five minutes more saw Lorenza Lena completely equipped as an English midshipman; with her arm under mine, we passed over the tops of the houses; and, after overcoming some unavoidable obstacles, succeeded in getting in through a window at the Spanish consul's, where, immediately descending the stairs, we proceeded to the street, and walked quickly on to the Locanda Imperiale, where our horses were already saddled, and waiting my ar-

rival; we mounted instantly, and took the back gate, going at an easy pace, in order to avoid observation. Night fell as I arrived at the last barrier; and thus the difficulty I dreaded presented itself: hesitation would be ruinous; so, riding up in an authoritative manner, I shewed the officer a tiscara, or the royal firman, which his Highness the Bey had presented me with, in order to export two horses: this expedient, aided by the sight of all-powerful gold, succeeded, and we got to the high road.

"You may recollect that the distance from Tunis to the Goletta, or port, is twelve miles, and that several patroles of Arabs and Levantines are constantly guarding the country; in consequence of this I rode fast, in order to arrive at the village before ten o'clock. About half way, I was challenged in the Moorish tongue, and several persons, well-armed, approached me: on recognizing my uniform, they informed me they were belonging to a patrole, and one of the number was then returning to the Goletta. Finding him an inquisitive fellow, I endeavoured to interest him; and having received an offer of his pipe and services, which I accepted, I seized the opportunity of presenting five pieces of gold for his attention, and any expenses which my horses might incur during their stay at the Port. This well-timed act of munificence wrought a miracle in my favour: riding on at an easy pace, he remarked, with a laugh, which enlivened his dark countenance, that my compa-

nion was very silent, and but rather an aukward horseman, as the poor midshipman was often obliged to assist himself on his saddle, by grasping the pommel with both hands. But, notwithstanding all these observations, my trusty guide at length told me his suspicions of my charge's sex, yet assured me of his honour and fidelity. My answer was suitable to the generosity of his conduct; and on our arrival at the Goletta his silence was remembered with suitable gratitude. Here again another difficulty presented itself; a strong sirocco wind had set in, and the sea ran so high, that my endeavours to persuade the old caia to send a boat on board the schooner were ineffectual. I was invited up, together with my fellow-traveller, where several Moors of distinction received us, and refreshments were brought, which, indeed, I would willingly have dispensed with. My young friend attracted the attention of every one; and her supposed ignorance of the Italian language, as well as a difference of countenance, &c. tended, no doubt, to create sentiments rather unfavourable to manhood. Finding all my endeavours to get on board fruitless, I exerted myself to encourage Lorenza; but at length an idea suggested itself which I put into immediate execution. The idea of interest is always predominant in a Moor's heart; to it he sacrifices every thing. Accordingly I remarked that my presence was absolutely necessary that night on board, as I was to be the bearer of an order to prepare the

transport to receive his Highness the Bey's goods to be embarked early in the morning:—the bait took; a boat was ordered; and, after encountering a heavy sea, I had the gratification to present the poor fugitive to the generous care of my brother officers."*

* The friends of humanity will be gratified to learn, that, since writing the above, the British government, actuated by the self-evident importance and necessity of the case, have liberated the poor Sicilian slaves at Tunis: the negotiation for their deliverance, and conclusion of a truce, has, indeed, been protracted more than eighteen months, owing to a variety of causes, which tend to obstruct all public acts of sound policy in the Mediterranean. The ill-fated Neapolitan slaves are, however, left to languish at Tunis, though all of them were taken before Naples was occupied by the French, and have ever been considered, as they ought to be, subjects of Ferdinand. The policy of leaving these unhappy sufferers, and returning the Sicilians, may well be attributed to that fatal half-measure system which but too frequently defeats the ends of justice, and subjects states, as well as individuals, to unmerited suffering. The situation of those who remain (about 400) must be infinitely worse than ever, as the quantity of labour performed by the whole formerly will now be required from the poor Neapolitans. The case of these unfortunate persons was in vain represented to the Sicilian administration by a friend of mine, particularly to the *ci-devant* minister for foreign affairs, Marquis Circello, and the present one, Prince D'Aci. No definitive arrangement has been concluded between Sicily, Algiers, and Tripoly, as yet, where a great number of slaves are in captivity.

When Admiral Freemantle went to Tunis, for the purpose of entering into the stipulations for a truce, he was accompanied by an English lady of distinction, who, desirous of emulating Lady Mary Wortley Montague, determined to see the Divan assembled, and actually accompanied the procession that awaited his

Having reflected on the foregoing statements, I cannot doubt but that your indignation and sorrow will be equal to my own. I have still something connected with the iniquities of this capital to communicate, which, however calculated to shock the eye of delicacy, ought not to be suppressed whilst professing to draw a true picture of manners and customs.

I have already shewn that every sense of either private or public virtue is extinguished in this part of the world: and it is a melancholy fact, that the most unnatural propensities are practised by the principal officers of state as well as by the Beys, and that in the most open and profligate manner. The young Christian slaves are too often the objects of these horrid vices; and the present prime minister, whose conduct is even more infamously notorious than that of his master, is said to owe his greatness and influence to his ready acquiescence, when a slave, in these detestable practices.

It is unnecessary to say any more upon this painful subject, than that these vile crimes, originating with the higher classes, have had that influence which example never fails to produce, and are extended all over the Regency; so that by the mass of the people, they have ceased to be considered as infamous.

Highness, dressed as a gentleman, and had the satisfaction of seeing what no other European female was ever before indulged in,

Nothing can be more palpable than the general ignorance of the rulers here. They are so totally unacquainted with the most simple maxims of government, and of turning their numerous resources to any advantage, that I am astonished how they have been able to exist so long as an independent state. The manner of conducting the war with Algiers, is a striking proof of the imbecility which is so conspicuous in the Bey's administration; and the origin of this foolish quarrel is truly ridiculous, however useful its continuance may be to the British interests. The Deys of Algiers have always considered themselves as superior to the Bashaws of Tunis, and, consequently, exacted a yearly tribute, which consisted in a cargo of oil, and some other trifles. The Bey's extraordinary avarice has latterly induced him to suppress this usage; and thus, in gratifying a most disgraceful and unhappy passion, he has sacrificed the best interests of the kingdom.

A peace between the two powers was ever a source of the greatest benefit to Tunis; as from the province of Constantina great numbers of horses, cattle, and other necessaries of life, were imported at a very moderate price. Very serious effects have already been felt in the total suspension of these supplies. The manner of carrying on an offensive war is rather novel in Tunis: the ships of his Highness are dismantled; and scarcely any steps have been taken to put the coast in a

state of defence. The few men whic compose his army are so disaffected, that they cannot be trusted; add to this, his Highness, the first minister, and Mr. Mariano, are solely occupied in commercial speculations and the arrangement of domestic broils. On the other hand, it appears that the Algerines have formed a determination of bringing them to a just sense of their inferiority. By a little political ingenuity, this war might be rendered highly useful to our interests in the Mediterranean: but I need not dwell upon the facility with which his Highness may be kept in good order, or made to yield to all the wishes of the British government.

While the order of Malta existed, a very formidable barrier was placed between Sicily and the States of Barbary. The gallantry and exertions of the knights kept them completely in check; but, on their extinction, a much more active hostility commenced. It is a singular and melancholy fact, that more captives have been made, and the general successes against Sicily greater, than at any former period, since the island has been in our possession; so that an event, which was hailed as the dawn of liberty and happiness to the inhabitants of the adjacent islands, has, in fact, increased their difficulties in this respect. It would be by no means difficult to prove, that a peace between those powers must be highly beneficial to Great Britain; while the influence of our enemies would disappear, and a new impulse

would be given to commerce. The increased strength of our allies must be the natural consequences; and the removal of that dreadful state of poverty, and want of national industry, which are at present so evident, would be no trifling concomitant to this most desirable change.

Before I conclude, I think it right to mention a family of distinction here, the members of which, though occupying situations of rank under his Highness, yet form a most honorable exception to the system of vice and corruption which I have endeavoured to expose. The head of this family is at present minister of the marine: his name is Mahomed Coggia; he was once intrusted with an embassy to Great Britain, and acquitted himself with great honor. It is, however, more important to state, that he is the steady friend of England, and possesses talents that would not disgrace some European statesmen. I am informed that the virtues of his private life deserve every praise; and in a public capacity, we have to regret, that his advice is not more attended to. His brother's character, (the present Caya of Bizerta,) is intitled to equal commendation, and his eldest son has, at a very early age, been appointed to the government of Porto Farina. In better times, it is to be hoped, that the virtues which distinguish those people, will be called into useful activity.

In the course of my visits to this place, I have met very few Europeans whose biography could

tend to afford much amusement.* They are principally occupied in commercial pursuits, and the dull monotony of such a life in this country, is seldom productive of any material variation. There are amongst the diplomatic agents of other powers, persons who are more distinguished by their duplicity and avarice, than any desire of

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* The importance of any merchants who come here to trade, supporting the national character of our country, by not contracting any debts with the Mahometans, beyond what they may calculate upon being able to repay, is too evident to require illustration; in fact, when the subject of any European nation leaves Barbary indebted in the smallest degree to the natives, his consul is everlastingly tormented by the head of the government, who is glad to have every opportunity of finding cause of complaint, no matter upon whose account. During my visits to this place, I have been incessantly annoyed by several of the most respectable inhabitants, relative to a countryman of ours, who left this in 1802, very deeply involved, and was only suffered to leave Tunis on condition that he should return to satisfy his creditors; or, at least, devote a part of his future income towards the liquidation of his debts, for bankruptcies are unknown in Africa. The gentleman has, however, neither returned nor paid any of the money due, although I am positively informed, that he has been lately appointed to the important situation of a consul-general in the Mediterranean. The highly dangerous impolicy of making those offices subservient to views of private patronage, will, I fear, be recognized when too late.

Should this passage ever be read by the person to whom it alludes, he will do me justice for having concealed his name, together with many other particulars that would not redound much to his credit, and will, I hope, see the necessity of paying some attention to the important subject which has called for the above observations.

supporting national dignity; some might also be mentioned, who delight in a spirit of intrigue, neither profitable to themselves, or useful to the community. It would, however, be an injustice to omit the name of Mr. Oglander, his Britannic Majesty's consul-general; he possesses a firmness and dignity of character which has borne him through many very trying situations, during a residence here of several years. It is hardly necessary to add, that his invariable determination to resist the unprincipled aggressions of the Bey, his minister, and Mr. Mariano, have rendered him by no means a favorite; but his chargé d'affaires who is now officiating in his stead, during a temporary absence in England, has kept the government in very good order since his arrival, and is, moreover, likely to acquire considerable credit in a negotiation that will probably be entered into shortly, for the liberation of the unfortunate Sicilian captives. His former services and imprisonment I have already noticed. Government will, doubtless, know how to appreciate his merits and sufferings.

To the talents and civilities of Mr. Humbert, I feel real pleasure in bearing testimony; this gentleman has been mentioned by De Chateaubriand in terms of warm approbation. He is a native of Holland, and has served the Bey in the capacity of chief engineer for many years. His knowledge of the Regency is unlimited, being intimately acquainted, not only with its ancient

history, but with all that relates to its present situation. As an antiquarian and scholar, he is equally conspicuous. His relative, Mr. Nysen, the Imperial consul, is also a gentleman of great talents and respectability. Though destined, from the various political changes of Europe, to experience many reverses of fortune, he is better acquainted with the policy of El Bardo, and the characters of those who reside there, than any other man in Tunis; and as a linguist, he is unequalled here. Both these personages being natives of Holland, have felt the indignity offered to their countrymen in the unjust annexation of it to France; and are, I have every reason to believe, fully aware of the dangers to be apprehended from a further extension of the French influence, particularly in Barbary.

Having entered so much at length into the state of our consular establishments in my letters from Tripoly, it is unnecessary to dwell on that subject here, except for the purpose of noticing, that many of the observations which I made relative to our political relations at that place, are strikingly applicable to Tunis. Amongst these, I am induced particularly to mention the great impropriety of not supporting the consul with the more frequent appearance of ships of war; the danger and impolicy of permitting his Highness to make his ports receptacles for enemy's privateers; and, lastly, the want of vice-consuls of respectability at the respective ports of the

Regency. If these evils are remedied, much will be done in securing the British interests in Barbary on that footing which our power ought ever to command. But the grand point to which I am desirous that ministers should pay attention, is that of a total revision of existing treaties. These documents are defective in every respect, inasmuch, as they merely provide for a few inconsiderable privileges for ourselves, without embracing, in any manner, the interests of our allies, or which is of still greater importance, the rights of humanity. I am no advocate for carrying fire and sword into the bosom of this country; but if its government and inhabitants derive their chief sources of happiness from an intercourse with the powers of Europe, who will attempt to deny, that they ought also to feel the extent of their obligations, and conform to a more rational system of political law?

In the foregoing letters I have, I trust, amply demonstrated to you that the powers of Barbary have, from the moment of their first establishment, assumed a character and line of political conduct, not only contrary to any received law of civilized society, but strongly militating against the liberty and happiness of the Christian powers. I will not, certainly, deny that the unhappy persecuting spirit which actuated the early Christians, and subsequently gave rise to the crusades, must have greatly irritated the Mahometans of that time. It has, however, been seen, that the

former have long since abjured the follies of the past, while the latter have continued to encourage a most unnatural spirit of revenge. Whether this is to be removed by intreaty or force, I know not; but the great powers of Europe cannot be indifferent to the subject, when the state of politics shall be once more restored to that equilibrium, out of which it has been thrown by the ruinous and destructive revolution of 1793. Although this matter is susceptible of a more lengthened detail and argument, enough has, I trust, been said, to prove to you the necessity of a radical and effectual change in our political, as well as commercial, relations with the whole coast of Barbary. As to the state of Algiers and Morocco, that will probably form the subject of a future correspondence; and in concluding this imperfect sketch, I have only further to observe, should you ask me what inferences I wish to have drawn from the facts which have come within my observations, that the state of Europe and the world require that England should be the first power in the Mediterranean, and that as we have hitherto, with the aid of Divine Providence, shown a bright example to surrounding nations, and triumphantly sustained tottering Europe, it now only remains for the wisdom and prudence of government so to wield the immense physical and moral resources of the empire, that without being under the necessity of having recourse to acts of violence or wanton aggression, the ends of national greatness

and prosperity may be attained, whilst the common enemy is excluded from the possession of countries which, in affording him an increase of power, would be inimical to the well being of Great Britain, and the happiness of mankind.

LETTER VI.

Cæterum ex eis negotiis, quæ ingenio exercentur, in primis magno usui est memoria rerum gestarum; cujus de virtute quia multi dixere prætereundum puto.—SALLUST, *de Bello Jugurth.*

Sketch of the Tunisian History.—Character of the Bey—his General Policy—and Relative Situation of the Regency with European and other Powers.—Remarks, &c.

Tunis, 1811.

THE ancient history of this renowned country has been so ably illustrated by other writers, that it might well be considered as altogether superfluous, were I to add any thing on the subject here. I shall therefore content myself with a rapid sketch of the manner in which Tunis has been governed in modern times. Every one knows, that while the original constitution of Carthage was administered in its purity, she not only successfully opposed, but very frequently triumphed over the Roman arms. It is equally

true, though a melancholy fact, that when venality and corruption usurped the place of patriotism and public virtue, she fell an easy prey to conquest. These are truths of too important a nature to be easily forgotten. In contemplating the subsequent fall of Rome, it would appear, that when the only obstacle to her ambition was no more, her ruin was also speedily to follow; and in their submission to a despotic form of government, the Roman people certainly proved themselves unworthy of their former greatness.

Christianity seems to have extended itself over a considerable portion of Africa for some time previous to the appearance of Mahomet: but if several later authors may be believed, the Christians of Africa participated in all the degeneracy of those days; and were infinitely more remarkable for bigotry and superstition, than for virtue or greatness of soul.* They naturally became an

* It would appear from the following character of the people of Africa, after the dissemination of Christianity, that the spirit and virtue of Rome were completely destroyed; their easy conquest by the Saracens need not, therefore, be a matter of surprize.

Omnes denique habent sicut peculiaria mala, etiam quædam bona. In Afris pene omnibus nescio quid non malum. Si accusanda est inhumanitas, inhumani sunt, si ebrietas ebriosi sunt, si falsitas fallacissimi, si dolus fraudulentissimi, si cupiditas cupidissimi, si perfidia perfidissimi, impuritas eorum, atque blasphemia, his omnibus dediscenda non sunt, quia illis supra diximus malis aliarum gentium, his autem etiam sua ipsorum, vicerunt, ac primùm, ut de impuritate dicamus, quis nescit

easy conquest to the Saracen invaders, who came here under Sidi Occuba, a famous Arabian chief, sent by the Caliph Othman, with the flower of the Arabian cavalry, in the seventh century, to conquer this part of Africa. Cairouan was fixed on as the seat of government; and a viceroy soon appointed, with the additional title of Emir, or prince of the believers, to be the future ruler of this country. This species of government continued, amidst various wars and partial revolutions, for a period of nearly five centuries, till 1206; when a total change in the affairs of Africa placed a new dynasty; the Almahades, on the throne of Morocco, with a jurisdiction which extended over the whole of Barbary. This family, celebrated as much for its successes as its ultimate misfortunes, kept a Governor at Tunis, while the Sovereign resided at his own capital: but their authority was so weakened by intestine broils, and the terrible disaster which befel the Moors at Tolosa, (known in Spain by the epithet of Las Navas de Tolosa,) that the Arabs, in many parts of the kingdom, particularly at Tunis, grew tired of the government, and revolted; shutting the Governor up within the walls of the city. A strong armament was, however, sent to his relief from Cartha-

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Africam totam obscœnis libidinum tœdis semper arcisse; non ut terram, ac sedem hominum, sed ut Ætnam putis impudicarum esse flammarum.—*Salvianus*.

It was not until the year 722, during the pontificate of Gregory II., that the Christians were completely driven out of Africa.

gena, commanded by an able and enterprizing general, called Abdelhadi; who soon succeeded in restoring harmony amongst the Arabs, and became himself governor of the province, where he continued quietly till his death: he was then succeeded in the government by his eldest son, Abou-Sukhari, a man distinguished for his bravery and prudence. Without regarding the commotions which continued to agitate Morocco, Abou-Sukhari, very wisely directed his attention to the aggrandizement of his own family and province. Raising a large army, he penetrated into the eastern interior, and made several tribes of Arabs tributary; after which he returned to the capital with immense treasures, the spoils of his victorious arms. The latter days of this personage resembled those of an independent prince, rather than a subject; nor had the Almahades any further means of reducing him to a state of subserviency, exhausted as they were by their rivals, the Merin family, which aspired to the throne of Morocco at that time. He was therefore enabled to leave his son, Abou Ferez, in peaceable possession of his dignity and treasures; from the period of whose accession to the Tunisian government it ceased to be any longer dependent on its former sovereigns; for, being endowed with great talents, and insatiable ambition, Abou Ferez immediately conceived the plan of making himself formidable to the contending parties in Morocco. In effect, he lost no time in marching at the head of a numerous mili-

tary force, and invading the kingdom of Tremizan, soon reduced the inhabitants to subjection; thence setting out for the purpose of attacking the King of Fez, then at war with Morocco, the terror of his arms was so great, that a splendid embassy was sent to meet him, charged with rich presents, acknowledging his superiority, and soliciting that he would enter into terms of friendship with the sovereign of that country. Thus ending the campaign by a successful negotiation, Abou Ferez returned to Tunis covered with glory; where he no sooner arrived than he caused himself to be proclaimed Sultan of all Barbary. His court is said to have been regulated in the most splendid manner. The system of governing was, under this prince, and many of his successors, extremely good: the body guard consisted of fifteen hundred Christian renegadoes, independent of an immense army always kept on foot to repel invasion; there was also a national council, consisting of three hundred persons distinguished for their probity and experience. This comparatively happy state of things was for a long time enjoyed by the inhabitants of Tunis; however, under Othman, the son and successor of Abou Ferez, the Merin family having acquired great power as kings of Fezzan, they made Tunis and Tripoly suffer considerably from the incursions of their armies. One of the Tunisian monarchs was even driven from his capital, and obliged to take refuge in the mountains. In 1270, the disastrous and imprudent expedition of

Saint Louis was the cause of temporary annoyance to this place; but infinitely more injurious to the Christian monarch, who lost his own life, and sacrificed the greatest part of his army, by coming here.* The affairs of Tunis after this were not interrupted by any material events, except those to which an imperfect form of government must ever give rise, until the expulsion of Muley Hassan, by the younger Barbarossa. That prince having been dispossessed of Tunis, flew for refuge to the Levant, and from thence went into Spain, where he implored the assistance of Charles V. who had long been anxious for some plea which might enable him to crush the growing strength of the Barbary states. A more auspicious occasion could not possibly have been presented to that enterprizing sovereign; he therefore, without loss of time, fitted out a large armament; and landing at the Goletta, in the summer of 1535, took the castle there by storm, and soon after defeated Barbarossa in a pitched battle; when Muley Hassan was once more placed on the throne of his ancestors, thirty-five of whom, he asserted, had sat there during the preceding four hundred and fifty years. The excessive cruelties recorded to

* The heart and intestines of this prince were afterwards conveyed to Sicily, and deposited in the cathedral of Mon Reale, near Palermo, where the following inscription is still seen:

"Hic jacent tumulata viscera, et cor Ludovici Regis Franciæ, qui obiit apud Tunisium, An. Dom. Incarn. 1270, Mense, Aug. 13, Indict.

have been committed by the Spanish troops when they entered Tunis,* have tarnished the glory of Charles on that memorable occasion; but after all, there was probably no expedition of his attended with more real utility, or complete success.†

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* Susa, Sfax, and Monasteer, were taken by the celebrated Andrea Doria, in 1547; but were, in the following year, wrested from the Spaniards by Dragut Rais.

The attack and capture of Mehedia, in 1550, formed one of the most sanguinary conflicts of that time; but a fatality seems to have attended Charles in all his attempts upon this coast.

† The treaty concluded on this memorable occasion is of too important a nature to be omitted here, and should ever be the ground-work of future stipulations with any of these states.

Marmol, the Spanish historian, to whom Dr. Robertson was much indebted in compiling his elegant History of Charles V., states the substance of the treaty with Muley Hassan to have been as follows:—

I. That all Christians, of what nation soever, who, at any time, or by any means, shall be brought as captives into that realm, shall forthwith be set at liberty, without paying the least ransom.

II. That the commerce or trade of Tunis, and its whole territory, shall, to all sorts of Christians, be entirely free and secure; and that they may there settle or reside at pleasure, erecting, if they so please, churches, monasteries, &c. and have uninterrupted liberty publicly to exercise all the rites and ceremonies of their religion.

III. That at no time, nor on any pretext whatsoever, shall the kings of Tunis harbour, admit into their ports, furnish with necessaries, or otherwise favour and countenance Turkish or African corsairs, to what part soever appertaining.

IV. That the Goletta shall remain to the Emperor, annexed for evermore to the crown of Castile, in such wise, that the Moors shall never once entertain the least idea of attempting

The stipulations of this celebrated treaty, so beneficial to Europe, were religiously fulfilled by the successors of Muley Hassan until 1574, when Sultan Selim II. wrested the Goletta from Philip II. of Spain, and afterwards put an end to the dynasty of Tunis. This plan was executed by the famous Sinan Bashaw, who proceeded to establish a new government, which was in future to be subject to the Grand Seignior, his master; which he effected notwithstanding considerable opposition on the part of the Tunisians, and the inhabitants Cairouan who revolted; however, a Bashaw was elected, and a divan, principally composed of military men, appointed. Previous to the return of Sinan Bashaw to Constantinople, he left 4000 janisaries to preserve tranquillity; yet the new government was but of short duration, for such was the tyranny established by the Bashaws, that the people became violently incensed

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against it: and that for the maintenance of its garrisons the King of Tunis, and his successors, shall annually disburse 12,000 golden ducats, since these troops are for the better security of them and their dominions.

V. That the whole coral fishery shall perpetually remain to the Emperor and his successors, kings of Spain.

VI. Finally, that in consideration of favours and obligations received, and in token of vassalage, the kings of Tunis shall pay to the kings of Spain an irremissible annual tribute of six horses and twelve falcons.

With which articles if they comply duly and punctually, in such case the kings of Spain shall protect and defend them and their realm against all enemies whatever.

against them, and solicited that the Grand Seignior might ameliorate their sufferings by a different form of government. They were then permitted to elect their own Dey, after the manner of Algiers, which officer approached nearer to royalty than that of Bashaw. The first of these did not enjoy his dignity very long, being assassinated soon after his election; he was succeeded by Ibrahim, who in his turn abdicated, and went to Mecca, that he might avoid a similar fate: from the first period of appointing a Dey, till the time of Agi Mahomet Cogia the first Bey, there reigned no less than twenty-three Deys, all of whom, with the exception of five, were either assassinated or driven from the throne. While the Deys governed, there was a famous Genoese renegado at Bizerta, who with the galleys of that port, is said to have made captives of twenty thousand christians, in the course of a few years.

The authority of Bey, which was originally intended to be in some degree limited, is now become absolute; so that the members of the divan have little or no influence on his decisions: they are, however, called together, but merely to give a colour to his proceedings, nor has the divan any power in electing the head of the government, which is not hereditary, but depends on such of the progeny or relations of the preceding Bashaw, whose party are the strongest—and have talents sufficient to command popularity.

After the death of Morat II. his three sons

Mahmed, Ali, and Ramadan, all aspired to the government; the latter renounced his pretensions to the other two, whose contentions to get into power were afterwards the cause of much bloodshed in the Regency. Mahmed, who was of a bigotted and superstitious disposition, shortly relinquished in favour of his brother Ali, and retired to Cairouan, with a view of passing the remainder of his days in solitude. Scarcely had Ali been established and tranquillity restored, but new disorders arose; for in consequence of this prince having caused to be assassinated Achmet, eldest son of Mahmed, who had placed him under his uncle's protection, when he renounced his claim to power, *Achmet Cheleby*, or as some call him, Mahmed Icheleby, one of the great officers of the court, desirous of ruining both the brothers, communicated the circumstance to Mahmed, and promised to aid him in being revenged against Ali. Such an event, and conveyed in this way, produced the desired effect on him, and without further loss of time he flew towards Tunis, with a handful of followers. Ali wishing to meet him on the road, had no sooner left the city than Cheleby shut the gates on him, by which he was deprived of proper succours and defeated by his brother, who entered Tunis in triumph, while Ali was under the necessity of flying to El Keif for safety. Mahmed after this declared that he came solely for the purpose of punishing the authors of his son's murder. Those already warned by Ali

had embarked, and were on the point of sailing away, but were overtaken by him at the Goletta, where he put them all to death. Meanwhile Cheleby, pursuant to his original plan, stirred up the malcontents at Tunis, and persuaded them not only to shut the gates against Mahmed, but to declare that they would no longer be governed by two brothers who only seemed to seek their destruction, unless Ali was sacrificed for the public good. Upon this a great part of Mahmed's followers deserted to Tunis, and he seeing himself nearly alone, determined to be reconciled to his brother Ali: before this could be effected, or a junction formed at El Keif, Cheleby surprized and defeated him, but did not know how to profit by his victory; and the two brothers having joined each other, they prevailed on the Dey of Algiers to support them for a consideration of 40,000 piastres. Ibraham Dey came in person to their assistance, with a large body of troops, and they all marched to the siege of Tunis, which lasted from September 1685 till the month of June following; when the Moors, fatigued with the siege, abandoned Cheleby and retired to the mountains. Cara Osman, who commanded the Tunisian cavalry, then went out on pretext of bringing the deserters back, and joined the besieging party; thus situated, those who remained in the town had no other alternative left, than that of opening the gates; when the brothers were received more as friends than conquerors. No sooner, however, had the Al-

gerine soldiery entered, than, as usual on such occasions, they began to sack the town, and commit enormous cruelties on the inhabitants: this brought on a violent dispute between them and the brothers; at length, several of Cheleby's party, acquiring fresh spirits from the general disorder, rushed into the camp of Ibraham, in order to carry off Ali, for the purpose of declaring him Bey, but the former, apprized of their plan, which did not suit his view, caused Ali to be instantly strangled, when his body was exposed before the Algerine chief's tent. Mahmed sought his safety in flight, but was overtaken by his brother-in-law, Benchouquer, who represented that his presence alone in Tunis was only requisite to restore order and tranquillity; he added, that Tunis was the place wherein he should either die or reign. Mahmed felt the force of this argument, entered the city, and assuming the reins of government without further opposition from the Algerines or his own subjects, he prevailed on the former to retire, giving them another sum equal to the first subsidy. No sooner was he fixed in the government, than he gave way to the utmost rapacity and violence, oppressing the Tunisians to such a degree that they once more called in the Algerines to their aid. The application was readily attended to, and ten thousand men appeared before Tunis in a few weeks. Mahmed marched out with an equal force to meet them, but many of his soldiers having deserted on the way, he returned precipi-

tately to Tunis, where he found every one in the utmost consternation; in fact, many of his principal officers betook themselves to flight, and went away in a French ship that was bound to the Archipelago.

The Algerines plundered the surrounding country, and besieged the capital, which Mahmed continued to defend for some time with the greatest obstinacy; but at length, perceiving that very little permanent dependence could be placed on his soldiery, he determined to abandon the city and contrived to escape during the night, when he retired to the Sahara. The Algerines immediately entered Tunis, and appointed Benchouquer Bey, who, in concert with another named Jater, committed the most horrid cruelties, by confiscating the property of several hundred citizens, and then putting them to death by torture. Being anxious to carry off some women the relatives of Mahmed, who were in a sanctuary at Cairouan, this monster of iniquity roused the inhabitants of that populous city to revenge, and they accordingly rose in a mass and drove him out of the town together with all his followers. The revolution extended on this occasion to many other parts of the kingdom, and such had been the infamous conduct of Benchouquer, that the extortions of Mahmed were entirely forgotten. A large party declared once more in his favor, and a deputation even went to solicit that he would return and assert his right to the government.

They found him under the protection of a powerful Sheik of the Sahara, whose father had formerly been put to death by the very prince who was now at his mercy; but such is the high sense enterained of the laws of hospitality by the Arabs, that the Sheik disdained to gratify any feeling of resentment and even offered the unfortunate Mahmed a body of ten thousand cavalry to assist in restoring him to power. Encouraged by this generous conduct he took the field, and uniting himself to the malcontents, was once more received into Tunis with open arms, A. D. 1695. He did not, however, continue to enjoy his re-accession to power long, but having died soon after was succeeded by his brother Ramadan, at the instigation of the Algerines, who had been recalled from his exile into Tuscany by Mahmed only a short time before his death. The new prince's reign was marked by a scene of oppression and cruelties equal to every former one. There was also at this period an Italian renegado, named Meżaoul, who bore a large share in the government under the Bey and aided him in all his acts of tyranny. It was principally to the influence of Algiers that Ramadan was elected, as the Tunisian populace were decidedly in favor of Morat, nephew to Mahmed, and who was considered by them as the legitimate heir. Their want of success exposed that young man to the most rigorous treatment: he was even in consequence of the representations of Mezaoul, accused of conspiracy against the safety of Ramadan, and sentenced to be deprived of sight; how

ever, the operation was performed in so imperfect a manner that he was soon enabled to see as well as before. Shut up in the castle of Susa, Morat gained over his guards; and perceiving that the government of Ramadan became daily more unpopular, he caused the Aga who commanded the castle to be killed, and flew to the mountains, where his party soon increased to such a degree that he marched to attack Ramadan; who in his attempting to escape out of the kingdom was seized and strangled, while his coadjutor, Mezaoul, experienced a fate still more severe, for, when in the hands of Morat, he was shut up in an iron cage, where his flesh was torn off with iron pincers until he expired. The first act of the new Bey, was that of declaring war against the Algerines, who had opposed his election after the death of Mahmed. This war was a source of great expense and loss to the Tunisians, without yielding the smallest benefit. Like his predecessor, Morat soon began the work of tyrannizing over all classes of his subjects, particularly those who had voted for the loss of his sight: he is said to have shewn a peculiar partiality for the Christians, probably with a view of securing their attachment in case of future necessity; in this he was disappointed, for after a series of extortions and unheard of cruelties committed on his subjects, Morat fell a victim to popular fury A. D. 1702, being assassinated by Ibrahim Sheriff, captain of the guards, who was immediately after declared Bey. This man although

endowed with considerable talents and great personal bravery, was particularly unfortunate. A war which he waged against the Tripolines was very unsuccessful; while on the other hand his hostility with the Algerines proved fatal to his liberty, having been taken in a battle with the forces of that Regency, and detained seven months in captivity; nor could escape from their grasp before he paid a ransom of 200,000 piastres, and promised in the event of his restoration to power, to make Tunis tributary to Algiers. Led on by his evil genius, Ibraim endeavoured in vain to land at Bizerta, from whence he was driven with the utmost contempt, and throwing himself on the mercy of his former subjects he disembarked at Porto Farina, where he was immediately put to death. The subsequent account of the manner in which the dynasty of Tunis became vested in the family of the present Bey, Hahmoud Pacha, and the important fact of his having usurped the government from his nephews Mahmoud and Ishmael Bey, the latter of whom has apartments assigned to him in the palace of El Bardo, and as he lives on terms of apparent friendship with his rival will, it is said, succeed the Bey, are faithfully related in a memoir* attached to the Itinerary of De Chateaubriand, whose book has been already noticed. Some of the foregoing facts, rather differ-

* That is a very interesting document, as calculated to develope the resources of this regency.

ently related, have also appeared in that work; but they are more important, as tending to illustrate the fluctuating and dangerous system of government established in this country, than to amuse the reader; and serve to show what incalculable benefits might accrue to the people if, either through the means of foreign conquest or extension of civilization at home, a more rational form of government could be substituted in lieu of that which presents nothing but a scene of crimes, anarchy, and revolution. It is true that Hamoud, the present ruler, from his possessing a greater degree of political craft and ingenuity, has enjoyed more tranquillity than any of his predecessors; yet some very severe shocks have occasionally been given to his power, particularly in a late instance, when the Turkish soldiers, to the amount of 6,000, owing to the tyrannical manner in which they had been for a long time treated, formed a conspiracy, which would have proved fatal, not only to his authority, but perhaps his life itself: fortune, however, often favors the perpetrator of crimes, and a want of union amongst the conspirators, together with the interposition of a British officer, Mr. Egan, who happened to be in the city at the time, happily prevented all the horrors of a sanguinary revolution. As the particulars of this transaction are not upon record, it may not be superfluous if I relate them in this place.

It has always been customary for the Grand Seignior to suffer the respective powers of Barbary

to recruit as many men as they could find in his dominions, for the purpose of forming a corps, which might tend more effectually to strengthen their tyrannical authority over the Moors and Arabs: these have ever been of the most eminent service, and regarded by the people as foreign mercenaries; consequently a settled hatred has existed between them during late years, and notwithstanding their great utility, the princes of Barbary have treated them so very severely, that it is with difficulty they can now find any more willing to serve, so that they have had recourse to kidnapping at Constantinople and Smyrna, as the Dutch were formerly inveigled at Java. This circumstance added to many recent acts of severity, particularly that of disarming them here, in all about 6,000, determined them to be revenged not only on his Highness but all those who had made themselves obnoxious: they accordingly concerted a plan for subverting the government, killing the Bey, his minister, and several other officers, when one of their own party was to have been immediately elected in his place. The night of the 30th of September was fixed on for putting this scheme into execution. Towards eight o'clock, a body of 3,000 armed Turks rushed into the city, and began to plunder all the shops of whatever they found in them, particularly provisions for their comrades, who at the same moment took forcible possession of the citadel called El Gaspa, which was only guarded by a few Moorish soldiers. Those who had

been dispatched to sack the town offered no personal violence to the inhabitants, and when sufficiently loaded with their booty, hastened to join their companions in the citadel, when a heavy fire was commenced from it, on the town and his Highness's palace, El Bardo, which is within cannon shot; the consternation soon became general. nor would it be an easy task to describe the accumulated scenes of distress exhibited in every part of the city. The consular houses were instantly filled with several thousand families who flew to them for refuge, in consequence of their being held sacred by the insurgents. Things being in this way, the minds of all, whether Moors, Jews, or Christians, were agitated with a thousand fears, as to the probable result of success on the part of the soldiery; and the terror spread at El Bardo seems to have fully equalled that in the town. After a night of the utmost dismay and anxiety, during the greatest part of which the firing from El Gaspa continued, though without doing any material injury, the Bey collected all the troops he could, and placing them under the prime minister, (than whom a more inefficient commander could not have been selected,) directed him to proceed to the city, and take the most prompt measures for suppressing the malcontents. Those who saw the cavalcade move on from El Bardo have compared it rather to a funeral ceremony than an effort to suppress rebellion. It was on this memorable occasion that his Excellency, the Zapa-

tapa, proved himself infinitely better calculated to succeed in commercial speculation than acts of military prowess; for having entered the eastern gate of the city, he halted opposite the British consulate, and alighting from his charger, threw himself apparently in despair, on an adjoining seat, where he continued some moments without uttering a syllable to those around him. The moment was however too critical to be lost in useless inactivity; but a directing hand was wanted; this was supplied by a coincidence highly fortunate for the Bey of Tunis, for there happened to be a young naval officer, Mr. Egan, at our consul's, who, apprehensive of the disastrous result which might befal the Christian residents, were the soldiers to succeed, determined to offer his services: these were most readily accepted; and, mounting a white charger, the Moorish soldiers were ordered to obey him; he was also joined by several Sicilian slaves, and immediately threw himself into Il Castello del Mezzo, a fort within a short distance of the citadel, which it commands: here it required several hours before a gun could be got ready, the place having been left in a most ruinous state; they managed, however, to get two pieces of ordnance capable of being fired, and then commenced a heavy cannonade on El Gaspa; this was continued during the whole night, and made a large breach in one part of the citadel. Seeing themselves so closely beset, the insurgents began to quarrel amongst themselves, as to the best mode of proceeding, till at

length unable to come to a decision, several hundred stole over the ramparts unobserved by the Tunisian guards, and pursued their way towards the frontiers of Constantina: those who remained, driven to despair and without a hope of success, were, on the morning of the 2nd of October, induced to surrender at discretion. Thus ended an insurrection which threatened destruction to the life and fortunes of his Highness, who will doubtless keep in recollection, that his safety was on that occasion secured by the exertions of a British subject. When the malcontents were in his power, several were put to death, and others severely bastinadoed: it was, however, justly observed of the Bey, that he displayed more magnanimity in the discrimination with which he punished the offenders, than courage or presence of mind in forcing them to obedience. This might have been occasioned by a fear of irritating the Grand Seignior too much, added to a consciousness that the soldiers were roused by his previous oppressive conduct towards them, to act in the way the did. To the British officer he paid the handsomest compliments for his spirited conduct, and professing unalterable attachment to the British government, presented him with an elegant sword. This event, although so trifling in itself, has been by far the most important that ever occurred here during the present reign, and may yet lead to consequences of a very serious nature; for although the Ottoman Porte consents that Turkish soldiers may be raised

in the Levant, it is expected that they shall be treated in a very different manner from that which they have lately been accustomed to experience. Since the insurrection, no confidence whatever has been placed in them, and it is more than probable, they will never be much encouraged to serve in any great numbers, as it will be extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible, to obliterate from their minds what has past. The most determined hatred has ever existed between them and the Moors, who, though detesting the Bey's government, yet prefer his sway to that of the Turks, all which will, no doubt, be attended with still greater security to his power.

LETTER V.

Singulare quiddam hominibus iis accedit. Nam cum regionem uberem colerent, nisi quod feris abundabat: his omissis et agri tuto colendi studio, in sese manus converterunt, agro feris dimisso. Itaque contigit eis ut vagi et patriæ expertis vitam agerent: haud aliter quam qui ob inopiam et locorum sterilitatem et aeris inclementiam ad ejusmodi vitæ genus adiguntur, hinc Massœsylii Nomadum, &c. &c.

STRABO, *Lib.* 17.

Interior Situation of this Regency—Character of the Bey and others—Administration of Justice—Anecdotes illustrative of it—Foreign Relations of Tunis with Tripoly and Algiers, and also with the Belligerent Powers—Commercial and Political Reflections, &c. &c.

Tripoly, 1811.

You will, from the sketch in my preceding letter of the way in which this country has long been governed, be enabled to form a tolerable idea of its internal situation, and of the sentiments of a people who are subjected to such dreadful oppression and to a state little better than the ancient one described in the motto. I shall now say a few words relative to his Highness the Bey's general character as communicated to me by some persons who have long been in situations which enabled them to know him intimately.

Hamoud Pacha, Bey of Tunis, is about fifty-five years of age; having held the government

nearly twenty-nine; a circumstance without example, in the history of this country. He is of the middle size, and possesses a countenance remarkably indicative of those traits which distinguish his general character. To look for virtue or principle in a Barbary chief, would be an idle task; yet motives of delicacy, and other considerations of a still more peremptory nature, oblige me to draw a veil over the conduct of living characters, particularly if their exalted rank in life place them beyond the influence of public animadversion. When speaking of persons, however, whose situation make them our national solicitude, it is but just that some clue should be given, by which a proper estimate can be formed of their excellencies and defects. Avarice seems to have been, in every age, the attribute and companion of a narrow mind. The subject of this memoir, carries his love of wealth almost as far as any man on earth, and his devotedness to a certain propensity, has on several occasions called forth the poet's expression,

——Puerorum mille furores!

In treating of christian slavery, this subject is more amply exemplified. As cruelty must ever form a large share in the qualities of a despotic prince, Hamoud is not without his proportion, and as to the *Punicum ingenium*, his Highness furnishes a striking proof of it, whether in his capacity of prince or as the head of a family: indeed this vestige of the Carthaginian character is traced in

all the Tunisians. How the Bey has managed to govern for so long a period, is a just cause of wonder, and proves that his talents that way are rather of an extraordinary cast. His attention to public business is unwearied and really astonishing: very little of his time is devoted to sleep; he never associates with his women, so that the greater part of the day is passed, either in the divan, or hall of justice, which opens every morning, the sabbath excepted, (Friday) at eight o'clock, and continues open till twelve, when he retires to dinner; after which, a short time is devoted to sleep, and the remainder of the afternoon to various arrangements in the state. The consuls of foreign nations are generally received at seven in the morning, in the hall of audience. There are very few women kept in his Highness's harem, one of them is called his wife, but they have not cohabited for many years, nor has she any children by him.

The Bey is supreme magistrate and judge in his own dominions; he passes a considerable part of each day in the hall of justice, and constant habits of observation have made him such a physiognomist, that where self-interest does not interfere, his judgment has seldom been known to err. It is highly interesting to those Europeans who visit El Bardo, to see the crowds that constantly resort to the tribunal of his Highness, for the easiest access is afforded not only to the highest, but also to the lowest subject in the Regency, whose tale of

misery is patiently heard. Without the intervention of lawyers or attorneys, the Bey's decision is as quick in delivery as in execution, for on hearing the respective parties and examining the evidence on both sides, a sign of his hand, or indication of the head, only known to his own officers, denotes the punishment to be inflicted, whether it be death, bastinado, or imprisonment, and the aggrieved have, at least, the satisfaction of immediate reparation, while this manner of executing the law, produces a most powerful sensation on the people: on the other hand, it ought to be recorded that Hamoud Pacha was never known to refuse a present from any of his suitors, and has even, in many instances, accepted a bribe from both parties; this happened very recently, when a very ludicrous specimen of his Highness's impartiality took place. A horde of Bedouin Arabs came here to complain of their chief, and demand his recall: aware of their intention, the latter contrived to arrive at El Bardo a few minutes before his accusers, when he addressed the Bey nearly as follows:

"Sublime Highness—in the discharge of my duty I have only been actuated by a wish to promote good order, and been necessarily severe in exacting the annual tribute; thy subjects have no other cause of complaint, although I understand they are about to accuse me before your Highness; I hope your justice will protect me against their malice, and at the same time I beg your

Sublime Highness to accept this small offering as a proof of inviolable attachment." Thus ending, he placed a purse containing ten thousand piastres before his master, who observed: "Well, well, give the money to Mariano, and let us hear what these fellows have to say for themselves." At that moment about fifty of them rushed into the hall, and roaring out their complaints all together, implored his Highness to place a less tyrannical governor over them, and supporting their request with another ten thousand piastres, "Well, well," observed the Bey, "give Mariano the money, and immediate justice shall be done." Then calling the whole party around the seat upon which he was seated, he addressed them in this laconic way: "My friends, I was fully aware of the justice of your complaints, and have most severely reprimanded that man, who has sworn upon the head of our holy prophet, that he will in future behave better to you, and endeavour to merit your esteem; take him, therefore, to your hearts, and be likewise good to him; and as for you, turning to the chief, let it be known to all these people, that if the smallest complaint is again made against your administration, your head will pay the forfeiture of your promise." When his Highness concluded, they all retired perfectly satisfied, and vociferating the most lavish praises on their kind and beneficent master.

Hamoud, though of a severe and forbidding countenance in public, is said to be extremely

facetious and familiar in private: his jokes, like those of Nero, are, however, of a cruel description; this was exemplified on one occasion since my residence in Tunis, when a boy was brought before him, who complained that a Turk had made a brutal assault on him; the latter being unable to justify himself, was sentenced to receive one thousand bastinadoes, and the boy five hundred. A general expression of surprize being manifested by those present, at the singularity of punishing the boy, his Highness thought proper to give them this explanation: "The man," said his Highness, "deserves the punishment awarded for the enormity of his offence, and the boy for having been found in such bad company."*

On another occasion there was a Bedouin who had a hen, and his neighbour had several eggs which he was desirous of getting hatched; they accordingly agreed that the hen should hatch them, and the brood to be afterwards equally divided; but it unfortunately happened, that thirteen chickens were brought forth. Sanguinary contests have often originated in trifles. It is no wonder that each of the Arabs contended who should have the odd chicken: this could not be decided on between them; and, trifling as the matter may appear, they actually took the hen and her brood before his Highness,

* The punishment of this crime, though rare, need not be wondered at, for let it be recollected, that in Barbary, as in other countries, those who make laws, very frequently break them also.

who had no sooner heard the story, than he sent for his cook, to whom the whole family were delivered, and ordering the litigious Arabs to receive fifty bastinadoes each, significantly observed, "You will henceforward know the consequence of disputing about trifles!"

The ceremony observed whenever his Highness proceeds either to the hall of audience or of justice, has been considered very striking and grand: a body guard of six remarkably stout men, selected for the purpose, and dressed very superbly in the Turkish style, having staffs in their hands, walk before and on each side, the one in front hallowing as loud as possible, in the Turkish language, "Long live our Prince! health to our sovereign! &c." which vociferation continues till the Bey is seated on his throne. In summing up Hamoud Pacha's character, I have only further to observe, that in the choice of his ministers and favourites he has always shown a marked disregard to talents and virtue; the whole of them, without any exception, being principally distinguished for the enormity and extent of their vices.

Without attempting to detain you by a detailed account of all the people who fill offices of trust in the government, which would be no more than a repetition of what you read in the biographical sketches of Tripoly, it will, I hope, be quite sufficient, merely to notice those who occupy the principal situations under his Highness; these will be alluded to in another part of the work.

At present I think it time to call your attention to the foreign relations of Tunis. To begin with her nearest neighbours, Tripoly and Algiers.—With the former no rivalry has existed for many years; the two states are consequently upon the best possible terms, and a mutual intercourse of commercial and other friendly offices are continually encouraged. This arises more from the imbecility of the Tripoline government than a want of inclination: for the possession of Jerbi has ever been an object of the warmest solicitude both with them and the Algerines. The above mentioned causes render it probable that Tunis will long remain on terms of amity with their Tripoline friends. On the side of Algiers the case stands far otherwise; for it appears that nothing less than their subjugation is aimed at by that marauding state: but such an event would be highly dangerous to the commercial and political interests of the European powers, as the preponderance of Algiers is already too great. Nature appears to have established a jealousy amounting to hatred between these two countries; and there has not been a revolution, or civil broil, here since the days of the elder Barbarossa, which was not attributed to the intrigues of Algiers, and in a great many they have borne the principal share. This desire of domineering over the Tunisians may have originated, in some degree, from the circumstance of the latter having so very frequently

called the Algerines to their aid when agitated by contending factions; an experiment highly dangerous in itself, and which has often proved fatal to the liberty of a country. Their warlike and enterprizing disposition render them a formidable enemy; and during late years, such is the increase of naval and military resources on their side, that the worst consequences may be apprehended on the part of Tunis. The avarice of his Highness operates probably as the chief reason of his not consenting to pay the annual tribute, as stipulated by Ibraim Shereef, which claim they have never relinquished: this is the plea of a constant war; and if it produces no other effect than that of keeping up a spirit of military ardor and prowess, there cannot result much harm from it; if, however, the Algerines once get the upper hand, they might organize a very formidable force in the course of a short period. It is for more refined politicians to reflect on the probable consequences of such an event: at present they are far more powerful, both in resources and talents, than the Tunisians.

At Tunis the American nation and consul are respected in proportion to the number of presents given, or extent of commerce with that country; if these happen to diminish, his Highness's friendship ceases; and in proportion to their increase and magnitude, so does the American consul return into favour.

The Danes and Swedes pay an annual tribute,

but this they have omitted for some years, owing to the state of Europe, and to the dependence of those two powers on the will of Buonaparte.

Spain has been at peace with his Highness for many years: he finds it his interest to encourage a commercial intercourse with that nation. With the Portuguese he affects to be at war, although the appearance of a small British squadron would be more than sufficient to induce his acceding to the most favourable terms for that state. It is indeed truly singular that, after recent events, nothing has been done by our government, in the way of reconciling these people to our Portuguese allies.

With the unfortunate people of Sicily and Sardinia, Tunis has long been in a state of open and inveterate hostility. The manner in which it is conducted is treated of in another place; on this occasion I shall only observe, that I trust the day is not very remote, when humanity may not only have to triumph in the liberation of all the Christian slaves in Barbary, but see an end for ever put to an heart-rending and barbarous practice. It is a singular fact, that since the French have entered Naples no captives or prizes have been taken from that territory, while unceasing war has been carried on against Sicily and Sardinia, the allies of Great Britain.

It now remains for me to say a few words upon the relative situation of Tunis with the two great belligerents, England and France. I have first to

observe that, owing to proximity of situation, and to more abundant means of considerably underselling the various articles of import required here, the friendship of the latter power has ever been most sedulously cultivated, and French subjects have been treated with a marked degree of partiality never extended to those of any other nation: the great number settled in the Regency, who have formed domestic relations, and acquired the language, have now become in some degree necessary to the Tunisians; nor can this preference ever be removed till British subjects are encouraged to settle in the country, with advantages similar to those of the most favoured nations, as stipulated in the twenty-fourth article of the treaty.* There are many instances on record to prove that the contrary has frequently been the case; but of late his Highness has changed his opinion, and seems desirous that a few British houses should be established in this city. In a political point of view, nothing can exceed the apprehensions and jealousy entertained by the natives of this country towards France: this is much heightened by a very old prophecy existing amongst them, which declares that Barbary will yet be conquered by that nation. Even in a less superstitious country, such an impression, however absurd, would not be without its effect; but here it is powerfully strengthened by the general conduct and inordinate ambition of Buonaparte.

* Vide Appendix.

Should the future destinies of France ever enable its government to invade this part of Africa, there is not the smallest doubt of their doing so; for to them, who are unable to preserve their Indian colonies, what a momentous object would it not be, to find in this prolific soil all the most necessary productions of the East and West Indies, without their distance, and often fatal, climates? That they would readily find these resources in northern Africa, no person who has visited the country can deny. Under circumstances like the foregoing, of the truth of which the Bey of Tunis is fully convinced, he cannot but consider England as the only power, who, from her naval and military preponderance, would, in case of necessity, be capable of either entirely preventing or accelerating his ruin; consequently we have a right to expect, and possess his unlimited confidence. There is, however, a fatality attending his Highness in the choice of friends: although conscious that Great Britain is his only barrier against the common enemy of mankind, yet, for the sake of increasing his wealth, by the imaginary advantages to be derived from an extensive commercial intercourse with the continent, he has given the greatest encouragement to the French nation; while, notwithstanding the important obligations due to England, every thing in his system of policy has been calculated to irritate us. In order to prove the veracity of this remark, I need only repeat the circumstance of suffering the ports

of Tunis to become receptacles for French privateers; the innumerable difficulties continually thrown in the way of the few British merchants who come here with a view to transact business, or in the hope of settling themselves;* the permission given to the French consul to condemn English prizes to an immense amount in the Regency; and above all, his unpardonable effrontery in continuing at war with Portugal, Sicily, and Sardinia; three powers which have made common cause with us against the continental tyrant, who, in the event of his schemes being realized, would most certainly invade this country. To these flagrant derelictions of moral and political duty in the Bey of Tunis might be added many others of a minor description, although equally calculated to prove a total disregard not only of his best interests, but of the law of nations. These violations have been frequently represented to his Highness, in the hope that he would adopt a more equitable line of policy towards his only rea friends, the English: in that hope, however, the public are completely disappointed; and, after having acted with impunity for so long a period, it need not surprize

* Mr. Consul Oglander will, doubtless, bear ample testimony to the truth of these assertions, as also every other subject of his Majesty who has ever passed ten days in this capital; particularly two merchants of Malta, Messrs. Bell and Wolf, who, owing to the Bey's injustice, have sustained great losses. Their more active enemies have, however, been the Zapatapa and Mariano.

the Bey, that a person deeply interested for the general interests of society, and who has given him unequivocal proofs of good-will, in the hope of a change in his conduct towards Great Britain, should have made this exposure, as the only means of exciting that degree of attention which the importance of the subject deserves:—nor have I any doubt, but that when the state of European politics admits of our attending more closely to the concerns of Barbary, the result will be as favourable to the interests of those powers as to ourselves; for at present they have entirely mistaken the paths which lead either to glory or opulence, by persisting in a system which must insure the detestation of Europe, and finally rouze our deepest indignation.

I regret that it has not been possible to procure a copy of the treaty between France and his Highness: it was revised in 1802, at which time several secret articles, injurious to the British interest, are said to have been added. All that could be collected on that and some other subjects connected with French trade and influence here, is contained in the following extract of a letter, written by a person long resident in the Regency, and which may be implicitly relied upon.

"The treaty between France and Tunis, revised in 1802 by Mr. Duvois, stipulates, that all vessels bearing the French flag are to be received in the ports of his Highness the Bey; their wants of every kind to be supplied, either of warlike stores

or provisions, without being subject to pay any duties whatever for the same. Another article declares, that prizes of any nation, captured by French vessels of war or privateers, may be condemned by the consul of that nation, and then sold in the Regency.

"The same treaty contains another article, authorizing to all the subjects of France resident in the Bey's dominions, the wines and spirit requisite for their particular wants; a privilege never granted to any other nation: in fact, it is not without very great difficulty that the British consul is enabled to import a sufficiency of these articles for the use of his own establishment. Of the many vessels brought in here during the present war, his Highness is known to have bought five. Those captured by privateers alone, within the last three years, have exceeded one hundred; the proportion of their proceeds remitted to France, independent of what was sold at Tunis, is computed at one million of Spanish dollars. There have been for about four years past, on an average, fifteen French privateers stationed on the coast of Tunis; in 1810 thirty-two armed vessels sailed from Genoa; they made a great number of valuable captures, nearly the whole of which were condemned and sold in this Regency. Many of them were at different times supplied with warlike stores, not excepting powder, cannon, and shot: the whole of them rendezvoused either here or at Bizerta; and several flagrant breaches of neutrality were

committed by many of them. Amongst the rest, one is of too barefaced a nature to be omitted in this place, as it tends to illustrate an uncommon degree of iniquity on both sides. A brig under English colours, the master and crew of which were chiefly foreigners, sailed from Malta for London without convoy, having a valuable cargo on board, which was, as usual, insured considerably beyond its original cost; the master, however, for reasons only known to himself, put in here, where there was an enemy's privateer lying: he soon became acquainted with her captain, and an agreement was made that the privateer should go out a few hours before the brig, which was to follow, and suffer herself to be taken: this actually took place off Cape Farina, and she was immediately after sold at Tunis. Although this is a notorious fact here, yet the injured parties at Malta have never been enabled to procure the necessary documents, owing to the desire of those about the Bey to keep the matter secret.

"Among the articles of commerce exported from this to France, a great many cargoes of Sicilian sulphur have been sent. This commodity, so necessary to a nation at war, although sold very cheap in Sicily, has always yielded an immense profit at Genoa and Marseilles.

"Whenever any French prisoners are sent here from Malta, for the purpose of going to France, there are cartels hired by their consul to convey them; these never sail without large quantities of

plate, jewels, and money, the property of French subjects settled here, or produce of English prizes condemned by the consul.

"The government of France has long established a regular system of espionage in the Regency; there are at the capital, and scattered about in various towns, inferior agents, under the management of, and paid by the French consul here: their object is to make themselves minutely acquainted with every thing relative to politics or commerce that is going on in the Regency: this is communicated to the principal, who transmits it to the minister for foreign affairs at Paris. The transactions of the respective consulates are by these means well known to the French government. With respect to the British consul's house, in particular, there are people employed in it who report every thing that occurs to the French consul. There is a constant intercourse between Tunis and Tabarca, where a very intelligent and active agent is employed, as well to give information as superintend the coral fishery there; he is also employed to poison the minds of the inhabitants against the British.

"At Bizerta there are usually four or five privateers at anchor; these have always some of their people stationed on the heights near the town, in order to look out for any vessels passing by at sea; when discovered, a signal is made, and the privateers go in pursuit of them. Several prizes have been made in this way: the same practice has

been resorted to at Zimbra, a small island west of Cape Bon, although within the line of neutrality established in 1794.* Many of the evils caused to our interests at Tunis are derived from the want of keeping more cruizers on the coast; and those which have been stationed near the Regency scarcely ever anchoring in the bays and harbours, by which the enemy would soon be extirpated. It has been in the absence of ships of war that all the injuries done to our commercial or political relations have taken place: a few brigs of war, stationed between Porto Farina and Cape Bon, would have, in a few weeks, annihilated the French trade of this city. There never has, however, been a single vessel there, except those who might have passed accidentally. Independently of the advantages we should derive from sending men of war more frequently into the ports of his Highness by their imposing effect, it ought to be remembered, that vessels on a long cruize require that their crew should be refreshed; and in what part of the Mediterranean can that be done so easily as in Tunis: a prejudice relative to quarantine has prevented many captains from calling in here occasionally: nothing can be more absurd, for this country is well known to be, in general, more healthy than Sicily or Malta."

I have already observed, that our treaties with the Barbary powers are in want of complete revi-

* See Appendix.

sion; being inadequate, in almost every respect, for the purposes of a successful intercourse with them. It would be of the greatest importance, to new model the whole of them, and specify more minutely the privileges which English subjects are to have in future. The necessity of making some provision for our allies, is also too obvious to require any argument. The conclusion of a general peace suggests itself as the most proper period for a definitive arrangement of these matters; but should the war continue, our interests demand that existing grievances should be remedied. In that case, the supplies of every kind which we have hitherto obtained with so much difficulty, will be cheaper and more abundant; particularly wheat, upon which his Highness has imposed a most exorbitant tax for the permission* to export

* This is called a Teskera, and must be procured at El Bardo before any article whatever of commerce is exported; its price depends on the will or caprice of the Bey and his minister, who generally make it beyond that of the article to be exported: for instance, a Teskera for wheat, the market-price of which is only forty-five piastres the caffizo, is fifty piastres per caffizo; barley, generally sold at twenty-four piastres per caffizo, pays twenty piastres; oil and soap pay in a similar proportion, as also horses, mules, and cattle of every description. Until the Teskera is done away with by the stipulations of a treaty, there can be no inducement for any British merchants to trade with this country; those of France do, notwithstanding all the restrictions that are laid upon them.

The revenues of his Highness, although uncertain in their produce, may here be ranged under the following heads, viz. tax on the

it. The exportation of cattle has been refused on a plea that there was a scarcity of them in the Regency: than which nothing can be more untrue. Mules and horses have been withheld for similar reasons: these might be got with facility, without materially affecting the country. Another most important subject would naturally occupy the attention of any person who might be sent to this country for the purpose of revising, or rather new modelling, our treaties with it: I allude to the abolition of Christian slavery; the continuance of which is highly disgraceful to the European powers, particularly Great Britain and France, in whose power it is, at any time, to remove the evil. As much has been said on this sad topic elsewhere, I shall conclude this part of my subject with an assurance of having advanced nothing relative to the politics of this place which is not drawn from the most authentic sources. I have also to express a hope that the facts thus brought together will be found of sufficient importance to attract the attention of statesmen, and not be devoid of amusement to the public.*

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exportation of wheat, barley, and all other articles of export; ditto on the different tribes of Bedouin Arabs; farming of the Bizerta fishery; tax on the charcoal manufacturers; on sellers of wool; on the monopoly of hides and wax; presents, *i. e.* bribes, from the French and other merchants settled in Tunis; large presents from the different nations of Europe, plunder of his corsairs, slaves, &c. &c.

* The elegant and enlightened Le Sage, author of a highly

interesting work, the "Atlas Historique," &c. published at Paris in 1805, has summed up the history and character of these people in a manner which cannot be read with too much attention, or too frequently repeated:—"Les nouveaux maitres de l'Afrique se divisèrent, se battirent, et s'affoiblirent, Fez, Maroc, Algir, Tunis, Tripoli s'elevèrent sous des dynastées différentes. Mais ce furent des camps tumultueux plutôt que des villes florissantes, ces peuples destructeurs par profession et par goût, avides de guerre et de brigandage, meprisèrent les champs et coururent les mers; ils infestèrent les côtés de la Méditerranée, aimant bien mieux aller piller ou brûler au loin les moissons Chrétiennes, que de soigner et de recueiller les leurs. Enfin après quelques siècles d'une domination qui replongea ces belles et fertiles contrées dans une barbarie complète, les Sarrasins furent subjugués par les Turcs, encore plus barbares qu'eux: le Grand Seigneur ne pouvant conserver des conquêtes aussi eloignées, elles devinrent l'appeinage de ses Lieutenans, qui voulurent bien professer une independance à peu-pres nominale; alors prit naissance [illegible] politique actuelle de la [illegible] de Barbarie ou le Dey est le tyran, la milice [illegible] le [illegible], et les habitants les esclaves; telle est l'image de cet ensemble anarchique qui se gouverne tumultuairement, ne soigne point les terres, pirate les mers, se dit sujet du Grand Seigneur, et n'obeit a personne!

Cependant le temp n'est pas loin peut-être ou ce beau pays rentrera dans le Sein de la Société Européenne; les grands evénements des nos jours ont familiarisé nos idées avec les grandes enterprizes, et nous presentent comme aisées des choses crues jusqu'a ce moment difficiles ou même impossibles. Qui pourroit après l'invasion de l'Egypt soutenir que celle de Tunis et d'Algir seroit chimerique? *et cependant de quelle utilité ne seroit pas une acquisition qui aneanteroit la Barbarie dans ce quartier de la terre, procureroit la sureté des mers, rendroit des greniers à l'Europe, et des contrées à la civilization!!!*"

It is hardly necessary to point out who this energetic writer alludes to. I am, however, convinced, that there are other nations of Europe which might coalesce, and prevent France from extending her long premeditated conquests in this quarter.

LETTERS FROM MALTA.

LETTER I.

S'il est bon de savoir employer les hommes tels qu'ils sont, il vaut beaucoup mieux les rendre tels qu'on a besoin qu'ils soient." J. J. ROUSSEAU.

Geographical Notices — Valetta — Other Cities, Towns, &c.—Gozo—Productions and Manufactures—Effects of British Occupation on the National Industry—Proposed Improvements in Agriculture—Climate—Inhabitants and Population—Historical Sketch from the Christian Era—Sieges—Occupation by the French—Improvident Capitulation of Valetta—Proposed Amelioration of the Political State of the Island —State of Religion and of the Clergy—Public Education—Hospitals—Hints for further Improvements.

Malta, 1812.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

HAVING understood from your late London papers that the British government contemplate some very important changes in the civil administration of this interesting island, the possession of which is so necessary to the consolidation of our power in the Mediterranean, I have collected

some facts relative to its civil and political relations, the result of an almost uninterrupted residence here of three years, and which, though devoid of that classical elegance, and methodical arrangement, that belong exclusively to the more refined scholar, will, I trust, be calculated not only to afford you information, but to assist your statesmen at home in forming a correct idea of the real state of Malta; while general inquirers amongst your friends will probably meet with a few remarks which have not been hitherto made.

The geographical situation of Malta has been so repeatedly described, that it will be only necessary to advert to a few particulars respecting it on the present occasion. The island's centre is situated in latitude 35° 50′ north, and 14° 12′ east longitude, with a circumference of sixty miles; exclusive of Gozo, which is thirty miles round. The latter is separated from Malta by a deep and narrow channel; in the centre of which there is a small island, called Corvino; in which is also a creek where merchant vessels often take shelter, when unable, from contrary winds or other causes, to reach the port of Valetta, it being extremely secure from all winds. The largest men of war may pass with perfect safety between Malta and Gozo, and on either side of Corvino, with the exception of a shoal within a mile of the eastern extremity of the island, and a small rock considerably above water on the south side called Folseto. Malta may be

approached within pistol shot on every part. The southern part is inaccessible, but towards the north there are several landing places. Valetta, the capital, and a magnificent city, both in regard to the elegance of its buildings, and beautiful regularity of the streets, rises on the peninsula formerly called Gibel el Ras, and divides two of the finest harbours of Europe;* Marsa Muschetto on the west, and the Grand Port towards the east. The immense fortifications which surround Valetta, and its suburbs of Floriana, Victoriosa, and Burmuloe, situated on the east side of the Grand Port, have long excited universal admiration, and render this part of the island one of the strongest military positions imaginable. It has, however, been observed by several engineers, that the works are infinitely too complicated and extensive, considering the present political situation of Malta, and the probability that no power, into whose hands it may fall, would ever be enabled to keep a sufficient garrison for its defence against a large army; for it is said, that in order to man the lines properly, at least 30,000 men would be required.

About eight miles to the westward of Valetta, there is a fine bay, where St. Paul is said to have been shipwrecked,† now called after that apostle.

* The circumstance of Malta being removed from Africa into Europe by an English act of parliament, is too well known to require illustration.

† Vide the Acts, chap. xxvii.

This anchorage was much frequented during the blockade and siege of the capital in 1799; it is defended by several strong forts and towers. Marsa Scirocco, at the eastern end of the island, was also a rendezvous for our men of war at the above period; but cannot, any more than St. Paul's, be considered as an eligible place of shelter, except during the summer months.

There are scattered about different parts of the interior, twenty-two casals, or villages, and one city, Citta Vechio, or Notabile, the ancient capital. The latter, though thinly inhabited, is surrounded with a strong rampart, and very agreeably situated. The villages are extremely well built, and have several fine churches, besides convents and consecrated spots. They are all, however, destitute of picturesque beauty, which is not, in fact, to be found in any part of the island. A Luogo Tenente, or civil governor, appointed by the civil commissioner, is placed over each casal to maintain order and regularity amongst the inhabitants. There is also a Casselano, not unlike our parish priest, nominated by the bishop, and who is a species of ecclesiastical governor.

At a distance Malta presents nearly a plain surface, its highest parts not exceeding 400 yards above the level of the sea.* The soil is formed

* Tasso does not forget Malta in his *Jerusalemme Liberata:*

"Tripoli appar sul lido; e'ncontra a questa
Giace Malta fra l' onde occulta e bassa."—*Canto* 15.

of a reddish-loamy mould, and although it has seldom more than from ten to sixteen inches depth, there are no productions of Europe, or of the tropical climates hitherto tried, that have not succeeded admirably. Sterility is, indeed, sometimes occasioned by the prevalence of south-east winds, known here by the appellation of *Scirocco*; but, generally speaking, they pass away without doing any material injury to vegetation.

Gozo is much more productive, and even better cultivated, than Malta. The *Fungus Melitensis*, which grows on a rock close to that island, is well known to the medical world; and some writers upon Malta assert, that there are rich veins of gold and iron to be found there.

Amidst various other productions peculiar to this island, there is a species of gum found in many places, which is said to be an excellent substitute for cochineal, and many have informed me, that indigo has been sown here with great success; saffron is also abundant in many places.* The staple commodity of the island, and for which it has been celebrated from

* Not far from St. Paul's Bay there are very extensive salines, which were formerly a considerable source of profit to the order of Malta; but in our time they have been much neglected. There are some arrangements on foot relative to them now, which promise a renewal of the old system of farming them out, and thereby adding to the revenue; if left in the hands of the *administratori*, they can never be of the least public utility.

the remotest antiquity, is cotton: of this there are two qualities, white and coloured; both are still cultivated to a certain extent, although greatly depreciated in value by the introduction of British and foreign manufactures. There are several private looms employed all over the island, and at Citta Vechio a very extensive establishment is formed, and gives constant employment to several hundred indigent females, so that every encouragement should be given to the only charitable institution outside the walls of Valetta. It is, however, said, that the mode of administering this, is by no means unexceptionable, and that independent of a wide departure from original rules, a marked partiality is observed in the choice of those who are taken in. This circumstance, if true, is highly reprehensible, and rendered still more so when I state, that the place owes its foundation to the benevolence of an individual named Saura, after whom it is called. Besides the females who are provided for, there is an ample provision made for several old men; who, from extreme age or debility, are no longer enabled to live by the exertion of their industry. When we consider that our arrival and continuance here has nearly annihilated a source of national wealth, which had for ages been the principal support of the whole population, and yielded a very considerable revenue to the government, it is but just that an equivalent should be made to the sufferers. It will, perhaps, be said, that

the impulse created by the extended commerce of the island to public industry, has fully compensated the natives for their loss in the suspension of the cotton manufactory, and its cultivation; but a slight inquiry has proved the contrary to be the case, and there is not a cultivator of that article in Malta, who does not positively assert, that where a hundred hands were employed formerly, he cannot give occupation to ten now; whereas, the number of Maltese seamen has diminished very much since the Order's time, and the only resource provided by commerce for the labouring poor, consists chiefly of porterage, and employment as warehousemen in the capital. The cotton made into thread, stuffs, and canvas, was, during the days of its prosperity, principally exported to Spain, Marseilles, and the Adriatic; it is now confined to Sicily. Considerable quantities are, however, consumed in the island, as it forms the chief clothing of both men and women in the lower walks of life.

The plant, after yielding the cotton, is given to cattle of every kind, and considered as very nutritious. As the soil is so highly favorable to the growth of cotton, many persons here entertain a doubt, as to the propriety of making it give place to any other production: those who are deeply versed in the island's domestic economy can solve the problem; but should it be thought expedient to adopt another mode of giving employment to the lower classes, an abundant and

profitable field is open in the cultivation of waste land, of which one-third of the island is composed. The increased growth of wheat and barley; and introduction of various plants, trees, &c., have been repeatedly suggested, yet it will, perhaps, excite surprize to say, that agriculture has experienced little, or no improvement since the arrival of the British. Such is, however, the fact; and notwithstanding the very laudable efforts of the late civil commissioner,* who not only set the example himself, but established a public garden at every village in the island, no effectual advancement is yet visible. I have been confirmed in this opinion by the observations of an English gardener, who has lived at Malta for several years, and informed me that the gardens established by Sir A. Ball, have been of no use whatever, owing to his having confided their care and cultivation to the *Luogo Tenenti*, persons totally ignorant of agricultural improvement, prejudiced in favor of old customs, and above all, more anxious to derive personal advantage from the charge, than to fulfil the governor's original design, which was that of making them accessible to the public, and providing the farmers with plants, seeds, and shrubs, gratui-

* Whatever Sir A. Ball's talents for government might have been, there is no person who knew his Excellency, that will not joyfully bear testimony to the many private virtues which adorned his character.

tously. In a place like this, where the people are several centuries behind us in the scientific and mechanical branches of agriculture, it would surely be an important benefit to the community, to have something like an association formed, that might inspect and propose agricultural improvements, and premiums also, which, given in this way, are never more profitably bestowed. It is scarcely necessary to repeat the long established and important truth, that the government ought to take under its particular protection, an art, from the successful attention to which, are derived the riches of every country.

Amongst those changes which it is universally supposed would be highly beneficial to the island, it has been suggested, that the introduction of olive trees round the fields, and the Zante currant on the walls, would produce that effect, and in adding to the national wealth, produce a degree of picturesque beauty of which the island is now entirely destitute.

Upon the exquisite flavour of the various fruits of Malta, and its justly celebrated honey, it is unnecessary to say any thing here, as they have often been the theme of travellers; but it may be added, that another source of industry also presents itself in the fishery, for although the coast of this island is not very well stocked with fish, which article is sold at an enormously high price, yet it might be imported in any quantity from the coast of Sicily, or Lampadosa, if that island was colonized. At

present the monopoly of the fish market is a subject of universal complaint; and as a proof of the want of compulsory regulations in this department of civil police, it will be only necessary to state, that when an over abundant supply of fish is taken, a part of it is destroyed to keep the price up! This is an authenticated, though almost incredible fact.

The climate of this island is uncommonly salubrious, owing perhaps, in a great measure, to its surface being ventilated, for nearly three-fourths of the year, with westerly winds, and to there being no swamps or marshy ground, the cause of so much disease in Sicily; these and the peculiarity of the soil, may also account for the non-existence of any venomous animals, so abundant in the neighbouring countries. St. Paul has, however, the merit of having driven every kind of poisonous reptile out of Malta, soon after his arrival. Persons of consumptive habits have very erroneously chosen this as a place in which they might be likely to recover; but there is, I believe, no instance upon record, of any valetudinarian having derived the least benefit from a *sejour* here: in fact, no convalescent should think of Malta, while he can have recourse to the air of several parts of Sicily, the Morea, or Tunis, as the sudden and frequent transitions from heat to cold, and *vice versa*, have always been found extremely unwholesome to weak constitutions. Indeed, whilst speaking of the climate of Malta, I think it of the utmost importance, to guard parents who come here.

from England against bringing young children with them, as it has been attended with very fatal consequences. The air of this place is by no means calculated for children under six or seven years of age; but in those cases where maternal tenderness will not admit of a separation, mothers would do well to superintend the regimen of their own offspring, and to avoid giving them too much fruit.

The inhabitants are remarkably strong and healthy, generally living to an advanced age; they are also capable of supporting the most excessive labour and fatigue, particularly when employed in boats; and the velocity with which a *calissieri* accompanies his *calisse*, the favorite vehicle of Malta, has always surprized strangers. From the most exact enumeration lately taken, the population of both this island and Gozo is not supposed to exceed ninety three thousand; that of Valetta alone is about fifty thousand, of whom, at least 25,000 are said to be foreigners. If an increase of population is the criterion of improvement in any country, Malta has nothing to boast of during the last ten years; although some assert that a considerable addition has been made: but others, and persons whose opinions are entitled to the utmost credit, think very differently, and insist that the immense number of strangers who have been permitted to domiciliate in the island, have absorbed so much of its capital and resources, as to preclude the possibility of an increased population, which

naturally depends on a free and unrestrained exertion of the national industry. It seems certain, that in an island with its means so very limited as this, strangers should be obliged to pay handsomely towards the public burthens for a permission to settle, and withal be confined to a very small number; but this subject will be more amply illustrated hereafter.

Previous to entering into any detail relative to the public institutions of Malta; I shall offer you, as a necessary introduction, a concise statement of the most remarkable events of its history since the christian æra, leaving those of remoter antiquity to other and abler hands.

Soon after the shipwreck of St. Paul, which occurred A. D. 58, Malta, subject to the incessant political changes of that period, was transferred from the western to the eastern empire, a part of which it continued for above 270 years, till invaded by the Goths in 500, who remained only thirty-seven years, and were driven out by the victorious arms of Belisarius, in the reign of Justinian. On the total decline of the eastern empire, when the Saracens penetrated into Africa, one of their chiefs passed over here, A. D. 870, and soon reduced the inhabitants to obedience. The Saracens were not however firmly established, till a second and more formidable expedition was sent against the island in 904, after which these ferocious conquerors remained in quiet possession for 220 years, till 1090, at which period the famous Ruggiero, of Normandy, liberated

Sicily from the Saracenic yoke, and immediately after expelled them from this island, which was made tributary to the new sovereign of the two Sicilies, and continued as a feudal grant from his successors to a great variety of proprietors, till the memorable epoch of its occupation by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem; who, having been forced by Solyman the Second to abandon Rhodes, where they had successfully defended the cause of Christianity for 213 years, the munificence of Charles the Fifth enabled them to become a still more powerful barrier to the Turks, by granting this place and Tripoly in perpetuity to their Order, to be held, however, as a feud of Sicily, without any other acknowledgment than that of annually presenting a falcon to the viceroy or sovereign of that island in the capital, Palermo. Although the offer of Charles was made in 1526, the Order did not leave Rhodes till 1530, when, under their celebrated Grand Master Villiers,* they disembarked here, and were destined shortly to outrival all their former heroism, as every effort continued to be made by the generals of Soliman, Dragut Rais, Sinan Basha, and the two Barbarossas, to

* An historian of Sicily, in speaking of this great man, who had acquired such glory in the defence of Rhodes against several most formidable attacks, observes, "Recasi l'anno 1534 come l'ultimo di quell' Eroe che se rese degno di aver scolpite sulla sua tomba i memorandi ditti.

"Riposa qui la virtu vincitrice della sorta!"

Notes to Bourigny's Hist. of Sic.

dispossess them. Several attacks were made both on Gozo and Malta; and besides an immense number of the inhabitants who were carried off, Tripoly was wrested from them in 1551 by Sinan Basha, who had previously attempted, but in vain, to reduce Citta Notabile, at that time the strongest position in the island.

The incalculable importance of Malta in those days does not appear to have been completely proved till the year 1565, when Mustapha, the general of Soliman, and Dragut, appeared before it with a large fleet, and near 60,000 men, with a determination to conquer, or sacrifice their whole army. Considering the success which had hitherto attended the arms of Soliman, and the comparatively small number of the Order's forces, altogether only 10,000 including the knights, that admirable defence was one of those, which could only be effected by men animated with religious zeal and a passionate love of glory. The eyes of Europe were soon fixed on the knights, as upon their conduct on this occasion depended the fate of Sicily, and even Italy itself. The glorious manner in which they acquitted themselves, and prevented the fatal consequences that would have inevitably followed a failure, has been so frequently recorded, that a recital in this place would, I fear, only be considered as a useless repetition; but in reflecting that, in the short space of four months, and through the unexampled bravery of the Order, 40,000 Turks were destroyed, together with a

large fleet of ships, and the remnant of their force obliged to make a precipitate retreat, we cannot but bestow our utmost admiration on the heroic conduct of these men: yet, how much is it increased on reviewing their subsequent services in the cause of Europe; when, during a period of two hundred and thirty years, we see them continually opposing the common enemy of Christians, and, by a series of the most brilliant achievements, holding up a bright example of piety and virtue to civilized nations. Nor is it possible to deny, but that the Order of St. John should ever be regarded as the benefactors of Europe in general; which they would have continued to be to this day, if the accursed French revolution, that fatal scourge of human nature, had not interposed, for the purpose of deluging the world with blood, and destroying social and political happiness wherever it could be assailed by the insatiable ambition of those monsters, who rose out of that never-to-be-forgotten chaos of disorder and crimes.

Previous to the invasion of Malta, in 1798, by the army of Buonaparte, the intrigues of France had long been at work, to gain over the Grand Master, and all those knights who were sufficiently weak to listen to their meditated degradation. Many causes contributed to the success of this design, but none more than the powerful influence of the Directory, who impeded, by every means in their power, the payment of those revenues which had been hitherto allotted to the support of the

Order in the different Catholic countries of Europe. Deprived of its resources, and betrayed by the perfidy of an inconsiderate few, who have since reaped the fruits of their ignominy in exile and poverty, the people of Malta were for two years exposed to all the horrors of war. Having, soon after the enemy's arrival, rose *en masse*, and determined never to submit to the French yoke, they got possession of the country; and, notwithstanding the greatest want of provisions, and loss of 20,000 souls that perished during the siege, either through disease brought on by excessive fatigue or the sword, they persevered, in conjunction with an inconsiderable British, Portuguese, and Neapolitan force, till Valetta surrendered, in September, 1800 * by a capitulation, which makes the names of the British commanders remembered by the brave Maltese, even to the present day, with the most unqualified disapprobation, as these officers, and, as it is said, without consulting the patriots, entered into stipulations, by which the French garrison were not only enabled to march out of the capital they had so unjustly entered, with the honours of war, but even permitted to carry off their sacrilegious and ill-gotten plunder, from the church of St. John of Jerusalem, the

* It has been remarked, as a singular coincidence, that the famous siege of 1565 was raised in September, and nearly about the same day, the 8th: the anniversary of that one is solemnly observed in the island; but, from some cause or other, the expulsion of the French has not passed into a feast.

Universita, and, above all, *Il Monte de Pieta*, independently of private spoliations, of which there were a great number, and this at a time when they had not three days' subsistence in Valetta. The indignation and wounded pride of all classes of the Maltese on this sad occasion are not to be described; they were, of course, unable to account for the fatality which could have induced the English commanders to compromise the character of their own government, as well as that of the people of Malta;* but remonstrance was useless; and the terms of the capitulation partly were forgotten in the anticipation of the future advantages promised under the British government. Amongst these were a strict adherence to the constitutional laws of the island, an exemption from future taxation, and the ample remuneration of those who had expended large sums of money in expelling the French, besides various other immunities, to be arranged after the entrance of his Majesty's troops. Had the prospects of the people been realized, they would have doubtless continued to manifest the most unequivocal attachment to us since the period of our first arrival: but the unfortunate treaty of Amiens, by which the Order was nominally restored, for the purpose, as it was then insinuated, of affording the French another opportunity of occupying the island, created a sensation of the utmost regret and disappointment; and the

* Vide Appendix.

natives did not hesitate to class us amongst the other powers of Europe, which were only anxious for their own aggrandizement, without the smallest regard to the faith of promises, or the interest of those who had espoused our cause as they had. However, many causes having rendered the Grand Master's government unpopular, together with a conviction that, in the existing state of Europe, it was impossible to preserve the island from a foreign yoke, the Maltese were determined to make every effort in their power to dissuade the British ministry from withdrawing our troops till a sufficient guarantee was offered for their future independence.

In order more effectually to prevent that circumstance, which was actually about to take place, a deputation went to England in 1802, composed of four of the patriots, who prevailed on government to accede to the people's wishes; and Malta was retained, on a variety of pretences, till the renewal of hostilities in 1803; since which, every attempt, on the part of those who are really interested for the happiness of their country, to restore the ancient constitution has failed, and the parties have been, in many instances, treated with a degree of severity which has, I am sorry to say, excited considerable disgust, and greatly diminished our popularity amongst the nobles as well as several other families of the first respectability and opulence in the island.

The particulars of all that has occurred relative

to the Maltese since our occupation of it, is so minutely detailed in two works lately published,* that a perusal of them is particularly useful for any person who may be desirous of estimating the merits of the question between them and the British government. For my own part, I am only anxious to give you an exact account of the island's present situation, leaving to the wisdom of his Majesty's ministers to decide whether a revision of the laws, and the establishment of a constitution calculated to secure property, and disseminate impartial justice, would not tend to the mutual benefit of Great Britain and Malta, while the execution of such a measure appears to be the only means of restoring that confidence which has been forfeited in the non-fulfilment of former engage-

* The first of these, intitled, "Authentic Materials for a History of the People of Malta," and printed successively in 1802, 5, and 7, is the composition of Mr. Eton, for some years head of the *Sanita* here, and well known for his work on the Russian Empire. His intimate knowledge of Maltese affairs has enabled that gentleman to introduce a great variety of very interesting matter within a small compass. His details and observations relative to the claims, ancient privileges, revenues, &c. of this island, cannot fail to afford those interested for the future welfare of Malta the greatest possible satisfaction. The other production is of a more recent date, having been published about a year ago: it tends to confirm all that the former book contained; and not only justifies, in a very able manner, the Maltese people from the slanderous charges of their enemies, but serves to prove what a strong claim the Patriots have on the British Government. Both are published by *Cadell* and *Davies*, Strand, London.

ments to ameliorate the laws of the island, and render the people happy.

The number of temples erected here, while the Greeks and Romans possessed the island, prove how strongly the people of Malta were devoted to divine worship long before the Christian æra; their prompt conversion to the more rational doctrines of St. Paul after his shipwreck, tend still more to evince a degree of national piety of which few countries can boast. The subsequent establishment of a religious order amongst them, for the express purpose of supporting the rights of Christianity against its most formidable enemies, the infidels, has increased their natural zeal, and was more than sufficient to create that enthusiastic spirit of devotion observable in the island to this day, and which gives the Maltese, to strangers, an appearance of gravity bordering on superstition. The number of churches and consecrated spots, together with the frequent processions that are exhibited throughout the year, show that no abatement whatever has taken place in the observance of religious ceremonies, notwithstanding the Order's suppression, and the other changes in the political destinies of the island. If, however, the sentiments and manners of the people are at all tainted with an excess of zeal not suited to the meek and benevolent doctrines of Christ, time, and a more extended intercourse with other nations, will, it is hoped, correct errors, from which the most refined state of civilized society is, un-

happily, not exempt. It has doubtless been a consideration like the above that has hitherto induced the British government to treat the tenets of the Maltese with such respect: a respect dictated as much by sound policy, as by those principles of universal toleration which form the chief basis of human happiness, and ought consequently to be the invariable guide of an enlightened administration.

There are in the capital and other parts of the island thirteen convents for men, and four for women; in Valetta alone there are about fifteen beautiful churches, the greater part richly endowed, particularly St. John's, remarkable for the simplicity and elegance of its structure; the cathedral at Citta Notabile is also a very fine edifice, and well ornamented with pictures, statues, &c. The occupations of the religious order here differ very little from those of other Catholic countries; they are however, in general, much better off as to pecuniary concerns than their brethren of Sicily. The heads of the church consist of a bishop, two vicars-general, an archdeacon, canons, &c. formerly nominated by the King of Sicily and Grand Master. Besides a very considerable revenue, the bishop is allowed an episcopal palace in the capital.

Comparatively speaking, there are very few nuns in the island; and, fortunately, the most part advanced in years: it is also gratifying to add, that since the arrival of the British there have

not been many youthful candidates for the veil. I am led to believe that no diminution in the number of the Maltese clergy has been caused by the arrival of the English. An incessant and unrestrained influx of strangers into the island, suspension of the cotton manufactories, together with various other checks to public industry, have thrown an infinite number of young people into the arms of the church, who would, under other circumstances, have gladly embraced a more active sphere of life. It is but justice to observe, that there is a most striking contrast between the clergy of Malta and that of a neighbouring island; the former, with few exceptions, being regulated in their general conduct by an infinitely stricter regard to those rules of propriety, that are so necessary to render the clerical habit respectable.

Upon the state of public education in this island, nothing very favourable can be said; its importance, however, as influencing the morals and happiness of any community, scarcely requires illustration. A glance at the early part of Grecian or Roman history, shows that the legislators of those renowned countries ever made it a primary object: the rapid advancement thereby created towards civilization and subsequent greatness are the best proofs of its utility. Reflecting on the present state of Malta, it will no doubt excite surprize when I assert, that there is not a single public establishment for the education of children throughout the island, if we except a seminary in

Valetta, called the Jesuits' College; the total inefficacy of which to fulfil the object at first intended, is one of the most general causes of complaint amongst the natives. This place, as heretofore, is still supported and administered by the *Universita*, who are charged with the appropriation of the revenues; and there are a number of professors appointed, with annual salaries, to instruct the pupils; but their present number seldom amount to above one-third of what it was during the Order's time. The degree of instruction has been very much curtailed; and, as if with an intention of precluding the possibility of this admirable institution being regenerated, nearly two-thirds of the edifice have been granted to the British merchants, for the purpose of forming an exchange and bank; thus making learning and morality subservient to commerce, which should, in the opinion of many, be regarded as a secondary object in legislation.

This arrangement has been considered by the Maltese as a great infringement on their privileges, and it forms, amongst others, a serious ground of complaint; and here it may be observed, that there are a great number of superb buildings in the capital, inhabited by individuals who pay but a very trifling rent, that would have answered the above end even better than the College. The present director of this seminary is a canon, and obliged, by established regulations, not only to investigate the most minute concerns of his charge, but even

personally to assist in the education of the students: he is said to have occupied a place of considerable emolument and trust under the French after their arrival, but soon changed his sentiments; and, becoming an active agent in the revolution which took place in consequence of their cruelties, he acquired the confidence of Sir A. Ball, to whose patronage he is indebted for his present situation. That a scrupulous inquiry into the mode of administering the concerns of the College, and the extension of those benefits which it was originally intended to disseminate amongst the people, are necessary, cannot for a moment be denied; the result must be highly advantageous to the Maltese; and should the British government, impressed with a due sense of its importance, give to a system of public instruction that encouragement it deserves, that jealousy and distrust so evident between us and the natives at present, and which are so particularly injurious to the general interest, would be immediately diminished, and ultimately removed.*

From the airy situation of Citta Vechio, and its being placed nearly in the island's centre, some have suggested the propriety of making that

* "Le gouvernement ne doit pas toute faire par sa puissance; elle ne met que des bras à sa disposition; c'est par sa sagesse qu'il étend son empire sur les esprits. Quand il commande, il donne aux sujets un intérêt factice d'obéir, mais quand il éclaire, il leur donne motif interieur qui ne s'affoiblit point!"

Traités de Legislation par Bentham, tom. iii., c. 19.

the future seat of national instruction. If we consider these reasons, together with the advantages which young people are supposed to derive from being removed from the immediate eye of their parents, while undergoing a course of study, the adoption of such a plan is certainly extremely desirable. It has also been very justly observed, that a new establishment of this description ought to be divided into three divisions; as the species of instruction communicated to the soldier, seaman, or merchant, are necessarily very widely different.

The comparatively uncivilized state of the Maltese peasantry may be easily conceived, when I inform you, that outside the walls of Valetta, there is not a single place of public or private tuition, if we except the convents, which are, of course, shut to those who do not inhabit them; yet how easily might this be remedied? and in making any arrangement for promoting civilization in the interior, with how much facility and little expense might not the present rapid system of education be commenced at Citta Notabile? a system too, which has, for ages, been practised in Barbary and other parts of Northern Africa, as may be seen in Saugnier's and Brisson's Voyage to Morocco, published in London as far back as 1792.

The next institution which attracts the traveller's attention here, not less interesting to the friends of humanity than the foregoing, is the

general hospital, which in the Grand Master's time was at once the Order's pride and ornament; but it has now undergone a melancholy change. Amongst the horrors of the French system, their destruction of every establishment favorable to benevolence and christian charity, which they have found in any new conquest, has been a fatal and steady maxim. It was in conformity to this barbarous policy, that the famous hospital of the knights of St. John, was not only plundered of an immense quantity of plate on the arrival of Buonaparte, but instantly appropriated to the sick of his army; a more powerful injury could not have been done to the national pride of the Maltese, and this measure of the French general is said very much to have hastened their revolt.

During the Order's continuance at Rhodes and this island, a large proportion of their revenues were devoted to the support of this celebrated hospital; it was open to the strangers of every country and *religion*—every article of provision was served to the sick on silver, and not only the Grand Master, but all the knights, were obliged occasionally to attend, and personally to administer to the wants of the patients. In fact, it was an institution infinitely superior to any other in Europe, and which we cannot but consider as one of those rare monuments of universal benevolence, which did honour to human nature.

The building is capable of receiving above fifteen hundred patients, and possesses every ima-

ginable convenience. Since our occupation of Malta, it has been devoted to the use of the civil staff, having seldom more than from thirty to forty patients, and is superintended by the inspector of hospitals, garrison surgeon, apothecary to the forces, and assistants. A medical depot has lately been formed there, for the supply of our garrisons in Sicily and the Ionian islands. With a very slender hope of its ever being re-established on a footing like the former, we can only deplore the change which has reduced one of the most admirable institutions in Europe, to a place of comparative insignificance.

The only public hospital now in the island is one established in a house which was formerly a convent, called the Madalena, which, from its peculiar construction, limited means of support, insufficiency of medical aid, and general mode of being administered, is said to be entirely unequal to the accommodation of the indigent natives with any degree of comfort, so that few ever have recourse to this place. By a recent arrangement, foreigners, who were before admitted gratis, are now obliged to pay for being received.

The lying-in and foundling hospital, although by no means what it was in the Order's time, is still tolerably well attended to. At Floriana there is a very excellent establishment for the reception and education of orphans; also another in the same house, where mendicants are received; but that the latter does not provide for more than a very small

number, is evident, from the many who are to be seen in every part of the island. As mendicity has increased very considerably latterly, it would be an object well worthy the civil government's attention, to devise some means of diminishing the evil, by the formation of poor houses in the respective villages, something like those in England; where in preparing cotton, the staple commodity of the island, all the poor might be employed profitably to themselves and the public. At present there is no provision whatever for those driven to poverty by age or infirmity, except the above-mentioned, and that at Citta Vechio, already noticed, both of which, would not contain a fifth part of them; and to form an exact estimate of their numbers, it is necessary to visit the interior of the island, as by a regulation of the police, the privilege of begging in the capital, is confined to Saturday. In addition to the establishment of houses in each parish to provide for its poor, there are other means by which a great number of the labouring classes of the community might be occupied in the public service. If we except the roads leading directly from Valetta to Citta Notabile, and one or two other places, those of Malta are particularly bad, some being totally impassable, and by far the greater part much in want of repair; there are besides, no cross-roads whatever in the island: this subject as connected with the agricultural prosperity of the Maltese is of the utmost consequence; in a

political point of view it is no less interesting, it has therefore been naturally inquired why a proportion of those cultivators, thrown out of employment by the Order's suppression, should not be provided for in repairing the roads already made, cutting new ones, and facilitating interior communication, in all those ways of which it is so susceptible. It should be observed that on the south side of Malta, there is not even a pathway to be met with.

One of the measures which rendered the administration of the late civil commissioner so unpopular, was his appropriating the half of a celebrated religious establishment at Floriana called *Saint Calcedonia*, to the use of the army, by which it was converted into a barrack; there was no act of his Excellency that excited such deep rooted animadversion as the above. The original object of this place was that of a penitentiary; and as it was founded by private charity, the inhabitants remonstrated in the strongest terms against what they considered as almost a sacrilege, and even offered to Sir A. Ball to build a house which might answer still better for the accommodation of the soldiery; but, determined to carry his point, complaint was unavailing, and whenever a Maltese wishes to recapitulate his causes of complaint against the local administration, he invariably begins with an account of the way in which St. Calcedonia was violated, by being turned into military quarters.

LETTER II.

Necesse est, cum de toto ordine desperant, aliud genus hominum, atque aliam rationem judiciorum requirat——

CICERO *in Verrem*, Act. ii., lib. i.

Civil and Criminal Codes and Practice—Powers of the Civil Governor—Judicial Stipulations of the Capitulation—Tribunals and their Abuses—Representation of the British Merchants on its State of Public Justice—State of the Criminal Courts, and their Relaxation—Inconveniencies arising from the imperfect state of Justice—Monopolies &c.—Difficulties in obtaining Legal Redress—Oppressions and Litigious Practices—State of the Prisons—Inconveniences produced by the Number of Foreigners—Jews—Petition of the Maltese to the King—Its Consequences.

Malta, 1812.

HAVING cursorily taken a view in a former letter of those establishments which more immediately interest the lower orders of society, I now proceed give you a faint sketch of the civil and criminal code of this island; and although you need not expect this highly important subject to be treated with the profound acumen of a lawyer, it will probably be in my power to draw such

a picture of the administration of justice here, as will excite a considerable degree of surprize in the minds of those who have not visited Malta. It is, I believe, a generally received maxim, that in every age of the world national greatness and prosperity have been chiefly derived from an equitable code of laws, and their faithful execution; experience has also demonstrated, that whenever either of these requisites has been wanting, public happiness was endangered, if not totally destroyed. There is probably no part of Europe to which the preceding remark can be more justly applied than the island of Malta; whereby, an almost incredible perversion of original statutes, justice has ceased to be little more than an empty sound, and the people have nearly forgotten that they were once governed by laws which secured property, punished crimes, and promoted that degree of confidence so necessary to the well-being of a state.

In order more fully to illustrate the present state of the tribunals, it may be proper to say a few words about the nature of the civil Governor's powers, being the only authority substituted for the Grand Master. He is universally regarded by the natives as possessing exactly the same jurisdiction over the courts of law. The continuance of an association of four counsellors, called the *Audienza*, who are supposed to assist in his legal deliberations, proves this to have been the intention of the British government. Without

mentioning the capitulation, by which it was stipulated that no alteration should take place in the old constitution, this point being admitted, it appears truly singular how such innumerable abuses should have continued to exist since our arrival; abuses, the removal of which is indispensably necessary for the inhabitants' future happiness, and our own advantage. To say that excessive criminality attaches itself to those who have endeavoured to perpetuate such anarchy and confusion in the civil administration here, would not, perhaps, be just; but on a cool and dispassionate perusal of the documents which I now send you,* there can be very few who will not agree with me, in asserting, that many if not all the evils complained of might, with facility, have been prevented, had those in whom the power was vested, made the exertions called for by the voice of justice and impartiality; for it cannot be denied by their advocates, that a printed code, containing a minute and explicit development of the Maltese constitution, down to the period of De Rohan's administration, was always to be found in the archives of government:† and a superficial examination of that

* Vide Appendix.

† This is contained in a folio volume, printed in 1784, after the changes introduced by the above named Grand Master; and for which his memory has been so much censured. After having been at Malta for above three years, without knowing that such a book existed, an accidental circumstance enabled me to

book would have proved to the civil authorities here, that those onerous and vexatious delays which have for the last thirteen years marked the progress of the laws, are not only contrary to the rules of justice, but in direct opposition to the constitution; the commercial code is a distinct consideration, being absolutely defective, and by no means calculated for a commercial country.*

Although there are courts of justice established both for the island of Gozo, and Citta Notabile, those at Valetta are invariably resorted to by litigants of every description. There are three

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see it in the possession of a gentleman lately appointed to a lucrative office in the island; the public are in general totally unaware of its publication.

* From the extreme promptness and severity with which offences, tending to interfere with the civil government's authority, have on several occasions been punished by the courts of law, it would appear that the original code is by no means so defective as some imagine. In a recent instance there was an English merchant of the utmost respectability who happened to give some trifling offence to a late public secretary. He was immediately sent for to the palace, on a pretence that the civil commissioner wished to see him: on arriving there, the commissioner was reported to be absent, and when about to return home, it being Sunday, a party of soldiers seized him in the porch, and lodged him in the guard house all night; he was next day conveyed to the prison, from whence he could not get out until after paying a large fine and making the amende honorable to the governor's secretary, &c.; his process, it should be added, was concluded in six days! Bail to any amount was offered in this case, but without effect.

distinct ones instituted for the civil and criminal codes, besides another for the relations of commerce, whether on shore, or on the high seas. The first of these, called the '*Tribunale suprema*' is composed of a president and three judges; the second, '*Tribunale Ordinario*,' is administered by one criminal and two civil judges; the third called '*Prime Appellazione*,' is superintended by the members of the first in their turn: the other court is entitled '*Consolato del Mare*,' and is conducted by two judges and two consuls, *consoli*." Many of the singular inconveniences to which any person is exposed, who may be under the necessity of having recourse to these tribunals, are so aptly detailed in a letter which the commercial body of this island addressed some months ago to the civil commissioner, that I need make no apology for its introduction in this place. Although the interesting document relates more particularly to the commercial laws, some future remarks may tend to prove that the civil and criminal branches of Maltese jurisprudence are equally defective in their administration, at least. The letter is as follows:

"*Commercial Rooms, Malta, Jan.* 16th, 1812.

"SIR,

"The incompetency of the commercial law of this island arising from the defects and omissions of the revised code and the practice of the courts, is so serious and extensive, and producing daily

such injuries, that we cannot avoid detailing in a brief compass, the leading outlines of this evil; we have no object but to produce a conviction of the urgency of some reform, and if so soon as an opportunity and means shall offer, this happy measure shall be undertaken, our views will be fully gratified, and the trading interest of the place essentially benefitted.

" It appears that at different periods, alterations in the laws have been introduced, according as the exigencies of the epochs required. To the code of Vilhena, published in 1723, it is premised, that 'from time to time new constitutions adapted to the existing necessities, had been promulgated,' and in conformity that digest had been framed. In the year 1782, upon the completion of the present code, the revision of the laws was deemed requisite, in consequence of the change of circumstances and times. If those pleas, could, at the above periods, weigh with the government, with how much more force ought they now to operate, when the island's situation is so materially different, and its commerce experienced a vast increase.

As a striking instance of the inadequacy of the code, the portion of it assigned to matters of trade does not occupy ninety small pages limits, within which, no brevity can possibly compress the requisite ordinances, for the various interests, compacts, and operations to which the complex and diversified nature of modern commerce gives birth. Mercantile regulations universally form the greater

part of the legal institutions of countries in which trade prevails; of this small part many of te regulations are already become obsolete, particular enactments are superfluous, others impolitic, and some ridiculously minute: in fact the whole body of commercial provisions seems calculated for a period of the earliest infancy of trade. Certain institutions which might be serviceable are neglected, as the '*Assemblea de Mercanti*,' and '*Capitani Convenabile*,' according to Book VI. in order to adjudge causes.

By the ancient code six consuls were established, two for each four months; appeals from the two were made to the other four, who, in conjunction with the judge, finally decided the affair in question; and from this decision, there was no further appeal. According to the letter of the code, it is required that commercial questions should be conducted without the interchange of writings; without intervention of advocates or attorneys, before the consuls and assessor, by whom sentence should be pronounced. That in these points the actual judicial procedure greatly differs, as well as being in others defective or prejudicial, will subsequently appear; we shall therefore proceed to prove that the code is most incomplete, and that the system or practice of the court stands in need of a radical reform.

"For instance, the subject of bills of exchange offers a singular article of deficiency in the legal institutes, the word bill of exchange, or any thing

equivalant to it, is hardly to be found once throughout the book; no provision whatever is made upon a matter which ought to occupy a considerable portion of mercantile law, a form of contract, which enters the most extensively into affairs of trade, and which, as the most important instrument of commerce, has alone filled many voluminous treatises. In the case of protest for non-payment of bills, the acceptor may prolong the litigation for months, whereas in all commercial countries not more than a few hours, or at the utmost days are allowed to elapse between protest and execution.

" Interest of money in mercantile transactions is no where alluded to, nor any thing consequently enacted on the offence of usury; it is notorious that numerous rates of interest have prevailed and do, to the ruin of a great many traders, and the general depression of affairs in the market. Interest usually varies from 12 to 36 per cent. per annum, and the use of 6 per cent. in public institutions, can but partially remedy that evil.

" With regard to bankrupt-laws, the book only contains twelve short paragraphs, relating to fraudulent bankruptcies; it provides nothing for the due surrender of the bankrupt, for nomination of assignees, proof of debts, or distribution of effects, nor can a bankrupt finally receive a certificate to exonerate from future claims. In cases of failure which have occurred, the concerned

have assumed the charge of the effects for an equal partition, but a grasping creditor has often greatly the advantage over his more fair and moderate fellow sufferers, who stand thus unprotected by the law. No formal commission of bankruptcy being issued, the precise moment of insolvency is unascertainable by law; and, under no legal restraint, a moment of failure is frequently the signal to seize, sequester and despoil, that each individual may satisfy himself to the best in his power: to this species of rapacity, there is no check save personal honor.

"The subject of insurance occupies seventeen pages, the largest portion in the book devoted to one topic; in these some enactments are useless, others impracticably minute and much is wanting. The same is to be noticed in what relates to vessels, masters, freights, &c.

"The law of bail requires the surety to be possessed of landed property in this island; even a native, without this qualification, cannot be admitted in questions of large amount, which are now often pending in the courts; of those persons in the island competent to give bail, how few can be supposed inclined to undertake that hazard, an Englishman being considered a foreigner. A British merchant in British dominions, be his property immense and his credit unlimited, cannot be admitted as bail. If the law in most instances runs into laxity and insecurity, here it errs on the other side of rigour and caution.

"The above named circumstance is often a particular hardship, and occasions frequent deposits of money in the court; than which, nothing can be further from the spirit of commercial policy—the diminution of capital by depositing it where it cannot be productive.

"Another evil, is the system of sequestration; upon unfounded and frivolous pretexts, the most considerable amounts may be attached. This, again, is open to the exceptions made against deposits. In the true intent of justice, sequestration ought to operate as security, so far only as the demand: however, according to the law of Malta, for an insignificant sum, a merchant may be thus withheld from the whole of his property. Instances have frequently occurred of these sweeping attachments, for comparatively small sums, 'upon all merchandize in stores,' all funds with the public auctioneer, 'that are,' as the legal notice usually runs, 'or may hereafter be,' upon all monies in the public bank, 'that do or shall exist.' By a groundless or malicious proceeding of this kind, a man's transactions may be at once suspended, and his credit ruined; while the sequestrator, however profligate the act, is answerable for none of the consequences! We are warranted, by legal opinion, in believing that the very frequent and wanton practice of sequestration is not justified by the active letter of the law; which shews that the latter is sometimes as

loosely and mischievously dispensed with, as in others it is rigorously and injuriously enforced.

" It would require a volume much larger than the code itself to enumerate all that is there omitted, and to specify the whole of the institutions which are useless, prejudicial, and irreconcilable with the practice of any country where cultivated commerce exists. We may finally observe on the whole, that the minute distinctions and colourings of affairs in which the essence and force of a question consist, are no where discriminated; besides, no record of precedents for reference is preserved, and consequently no rule of decision or conformity of proceedings can be maintained, further than caprice or recollection.

" In answer to some of these remarks, it may be alledged that, to supply the wants of the code, the judge has open to him, and may select, suitable matter for his guide, out of the writings of lawyers, and the judicial provisions of other parts. To say nothing of the vagueness, arbitrariness, and inconsistency to which this must tend, individuals would be thus unable to govern themselves by any certain rule; and the most careful or informed could never be, in this way, sure of the legality of a proceeding.

" In addition to the imperfections of the code, we have a mass of objectionable matter to enter upon in the method of conducting a process. The chief evils are, the correspondentive way of carry-

ing on a suit, and consequent multiplicity of voluminous writings; the want of oral proceedings; of confrontation of parties; and due examination of witnesses. More fully to explain this subject, it will be necessary to give some detail of the method of conducting a suit at law. The plaintiff, after the citation, which is answered by a written paper, makes out the ground of his complaint in a document called the '*scrittura*;' this is deposited with the actuary of the '*consolato del mare*,' and the same is imparted to the defendant in a notice of '*scrittura presentata*,' which is to be seen by him in order to form the answer. In this stage of the cause, the reciprocal correspondence may go on, in charges and replies almost indefinitely, but the party aggrieved anxious for redress, soon makes out the notice, entitled, '*conchiuso in causa*,' intimating that the '*scrittura*' go up to the judge; these papers then contain the matter upon which the judge forms his opinion, *and they are taken to his dwelling-house; where the parties, or their advocates, severally and alone, visit him for the purpose of explaining and urging their cause.*

The judge having at length pronounced the decision, a notice may be given of '*sentenza cittata e publicata.*' The condemned has then the privilege, within three days, of appealing to the judges of the supreme tribunal. All the papers are, upon this, placed in the hands of the actuary of this high court. A new '*scrittura*' is made out, con-

taining a recapitulatory statement of the case, for the judge's inspection; the adversary may reply, as in the former instance, till finally the notice '*conchiuso in causa*' taking place, the papers pass to the judges successively, successively they go through the hands of the three, and the parties may, as before, visit them separately at their private houses; till, uniting, they pronounce a decision.

"The arts and evasions by which a suit may be prolonged are various, and practised daily with success by fraudulent and ill disposed persons. Upon giving a receipt to the advocate, the '*scrittura*' may be taken from the actuary, either of the '*consolato del mare*,' or supreme tribunal; and in both instances they are often long retained, or finally may be wilfully mislaid or lost; in the last case, the penalty is merely two dollars, which being imposed by execution, the goods seized must be sold, and the surplus of proceeds returned to the offender; in going through which form several weeks pass, and then the suit must recommence.

"This may be avoided, it is true, by the course called '*consirvile*,' which is to give out copies of all the papers deposited with the actuary, but this would be attended with too much trouble and expense to be ordinarily adopted. While a cause is in progress through the '*consolato del mare*," if one of the parties require the other to give testimony, oath, &c. to any point called in the legal

phrase, '*articolo*,' this may be refused; in order to enforce compliance, the judge makes a '*decretto*,' or peremptory order, intimated in a notice of '*decretto citto e publicato*;' from which the party may, within three days, appeal to the supreme tribunal. Before the '*decretto*' is confirmed, and the papers returned to the '*consolato*,' time must elapse. This is a fertile source of delay, as the '*articoli*' in a suit may be numerous. Refusals uniformly given, and the consequent '*decretto*' appealed against in successive objections, however frivolous and absurd, will have the effect of throwing these incidental points, as well as the suit itself, into appeal: for instance, if a party chuse to object to the cause, or to a particular point, that the same belongs not to the '*consolato del mare*,' but to the civil court, the judge must make a '*decretto*,' that the matter is within the jurisdiction of the former court; against which '*decretto*' the objector may again appeal!

"When the summons to answer interrogatories, called '*subizione*' are enforced, the judge is obliged to administer those set down, and the person examined to answer, though they may be irrelative, idle, and absurd, and even tending to criminate the witness.

"Even after a cause arrives at a sentence of the supreme tribunal, appeals may yet be recurred to for visitations, and the suit be still further protracted. After a definitive sentence is given, many months are often lost before it can be exe-

cuted: and we have repeatedly remarked the evident insufficiency of the present system to carry into effect the sentences of the courts.

"By these subterfuges and artifices, litigations are extended indefinitely. Ill inclined debtors, and fraudulent persons, have every facility afforded of withholding, at small charge, considerable sums. Honest individuals may be harassed in every way. Vessels with large crews have been detained under litigation, till the value of the former was not sufficient to pay the latter. Suits have been injuriously procrastinated, until the individual wronged, deprived of his property, has been brought to the extremity of distress, or until the offender has failed or fled, and the property cannot be received. Even public companies have been dissolved before a final sentence, and the proprietors were then to be sued singly, for their several quotas in multiplied suits of more expense than the value of the claim. Thus, rather than enter into law for moderate sums, individuals who have an industrious occupation to follow, and cannot sacrifice their time in continual attendance on the advocate, the judge, and at the court, will prefer enduring the loss.

"Under such circumstances of the judicature, no kind of security is felt in mercantile undertakings; we can declare individually, that now that the laws are somewhat understood, all commercial confidence and credit is at an end, *so far as it rests on any protection to be expected from these laws.*

"In representations of cases of actual occurrence which now lie before us, we find a question of a protested bill, twelve months in litigation, four months in execution, and incurring twenty per cent. in expenses; a capricious claim of a creditor of an estate entertained fourteen months, and after being cast in the suit, again immediately enabled to harass the estate with sequesters; a bankrupt's effects triumphantly seized at one time, at another, when deposited in the court, by its authority distributed to a portion of the creditors to the prejudice of the rest; litigation of three years to obtain redress of a captain grossly abandoning his charter; money advanced on a vessel, sued for thirteen months before recovered, and then the execution appealed against; indispensable papers lost from the tribunals, depredations on shipping in part unpunished, and where both parties are anxious for a decision, a suit protracted nine months; an insurance irrecoverable, on account of a trivial omission in a policy; fraud unpunished, and British industry proscribed. These are some of the numerous cases that demonstrate the necessity of reform. This uncertainty and vagueness of commercial law loosen the principle and imperceptibly infuse themselves into the character.

"It will thus appear that the evil lies first in the insufficiency of the code, and secondly in the method of conducting the suit. We might enter upon other matters, as the multiplicity of petty

cases, that incumber and impede the proceedings of the upper courts, the small number of clerks, and their inadequate remuneration, the little apparent utility of "*consuli*" and other like circumstances, but the foregoing are the main points, and suffice to shew the serious extent of the evil, and the necessity of alteration. The remedies are easy and obvious, and such as the learned judges themselves could easily suggest. These evils might be chiefly corrected by an improved code, establishing a jury of twelve or fewer merchants and making one sentence almost uniformly final. At present nothing like a summary court exists.

"We beg to repeat our anxious wish, that this evil which particularly affects us, might by some method be corrected. We feel confident that it will engage your Excellency's attention, and that you will not omit any fit opportunity for accomplishing this desirable object. We have the honour to be, &c.*

(Signed) "R. M. THOMAS, *Chairman.*

"*To his Excellency Lieutenant General Oakes, Civil Commissioner, &c.*"

When the foregoing is read, you will cease to wonder at the state of things here, or the situation

* This capital exposition was, I am told, compiled by a merchant of respectability in the island named Fletcher; the merits of his production speak for themselves, and it may be added, I think with great truth, that there are few, if any of his cotemporaries here, who would have been capable of doing so much justice to the undertaking.

of those who come to Malta to obtain the means of living; by turning to other papers* which I transmit you, you will see a further illustration in the communications upon which the committee founded their address. Upon a representation so clear and explicit as the above, it would be altogether superfluous to make any comment, yet one's surprize is irresistibly renewed, on reflecting that after our long possession of the island, and such ample means of improving its situation, no change whatever should have been effected.

Upon the exact merits of the criminal code† I am unprepared to enter, having had no opportunity of perusing it with that degree of attention necessary to form a correct opinion; judging, however, from the many facts which have come within my own observation, and the sentiments entertained by all classes of the community, it not only requires revision, but also that its provisions should be more strictly put into execution. The want of confidence in a government, or security to your person and property, must ever be considered as amongst the greatest evils which can possibly befal a state; they never fail to create public misery of every kind, and in paralizing the

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* Vide Appendix.

† That part of it which justifies torture and secret prisons, cannot, however, be too severely reprobated, and I believe they have never been resorted to under the civil commissioners. Vide sec. 34, 35, 36, &c. of Rohan's Code, in Mr. Eaton's work.

efforts of honest industry, render nugatory those speculative undertakings which individuals may be disposed to put into practice either for personal advantage or the general good. These positions are in a great measure verified in this island, where delinquency of every description has greatly increased within the last ten years. Here the magnitude of a crime is not more likely to insure redress for it, than is the most insignificant act of aggression. If one of the natives commits murder, or is otherwise guilty of shedding his fellow-creature's blood, he flies for refuge to the nearest church, which by an old custom is a sanctuary; and, cherished by the very ministers of religion, the monster of iniquity undergoes the prescribed penance; absolution follows: and society is again menaced by the midnight assassin: this has often occurred since our arrival.

Flagrant robberies are frequently suffered to pass without even a trial, and when noticed, the punishment has scarcely in any instance been equal to satisfy the ends of retributive justice; an assault, however aggravated, is regarded as a mere trifle, and you are absolutely without the means of obtaining the smallest satisfaction for several months; besides, except in cases of the utmost necessity, no one dreams of an appeal to the court, knowing, that after a heavy expense and endless litigation, he is sure of losing his cause if the adversary has money enough to protract the suit. The evils arising from this relaxation of justice do

not stop here; they have contributed most materially to the destruction of public morals, and created a total want of confidence between individuals; whilst the lower orders, and many of the more opulent natives, taking advantage of the apathy and indifference of the law, have formed a combination highly injurious to the common interest, but peculiarly so to the English residents. A scandalous monopoly exists in all the markets, more especially those for the sale of fish and animal food. The renting of houses is another fertile source of imposition, and nothing can exceed the rapacity or insolence of porters, watermen, and those who drive calisses; for the certain corroboration of these assertions, it is only necessary to appeal to any person who has ever visited the island for a few days. Although, as I have heard, by the domestic laws of Malta there are proper officers to superintend the different markets, nothing can be more extraordinary than the various impositions practised in them. With respect to the meat, in particular, that article is principally imported from Tripoly and the Morea (the supplies from Sicily are comparatively small latterly,) at a very cheap rate, yet no diminution is ever known to take place at Malta, where it is supposed that a profit of fifty per cent. does not satisfy the butchers. The propriety of sending the Morea and Tripoline cattle to the vicinity of Cape Passaro, for the purpose of being fattened up for this market has been repeatedly suggested, but without

effect; this measure becomes daily more desirable, when we consider the extreme expense, and even difficulty of stall feeding here, and as to pasturage, there is not an acre of it on the whole island. Soon after the late civil commissioner's accession to power, a species of fishery was established on the southern coast of Sicily, for the very laudable purpose of supplying the deficiency of that article in the Malta market; well boats were also provided for its conveyance, and the natives were flattered with the prospect of being no longer subject to the exorbitant demands of the fishermen here. This was, however, of short duration, for the latter became so irritated at the thought of losing any of their custom, that they had recourse to various acts of violence, misrepresentations, and other stratagems, till the fishery was at length discontinued by the Governor's orders, who, in this instance, as well as many others, is said to have carried his partiality for Maltese prejudices infinitely too far. I am happy to say that there are fresh hopes entertained of the foregoing subject occupying the civil government's attention, if so, the public may have immediate recourse either to Lampadosa or the coast of Sicily.*

Having made this short digression upon matters highly important in themselves, and by no means unworthy of legislative interference, I return to

* See letter from Sicily, in which this subject is treated at large.

the subject of legal administration; and am first to observe, in addition to the judicious remarks contained in the chairman's letter, that the practice and etiquette of the law courts here, are strikingly in opposition to reason and justice; whilst the examination of witnesses in secret, and the absence of any thing like a jury, the marked partiality, as well as frequent incapacity of the judges, render it totally impossible for the public to expect the least justice until an entire change is produced. The influence of persons of a certain rank in the courts, was curiously exemplified lately: a British merchant anxious to recover a sum of money due to him from the bishop's nephew, had recourse to his advocate, who, upon hearing the case, coolly replied, "I cannot deny my friend, but that you have every claim upon the judges for the immediate recovery of a debt so justly due; however, it is impossible that we can institute a prosecution against the relative of our bishop!" Indeed, it rarely happens, where a debt is disputed by one of the parties, though ever so justly contracted, that the recovery of it can be effected under two and three years; and where money is left by legacy, people are often kept out of it for years by the caprice of any one who pleases to throw in a claim upon the most futile pretext. It is only a few months since, that the father of a family died, and bequeathed upwards of two thousand pounds to his three sons: a relative prompted by a feeling of disappoint-

ment at not being remembered in the will of the deceased, determined to contend for a proportion of the money thus left; the harpies of the law ever ready to embrace an opportunity of gaining a little emolument, no matter by what means, gladly entered into his scheme, and as a first step the whole patrimony was immediately sequestered. Six months passed away in decisions, appeals, and new trials; at length the brothers worn out with constant attendance at the courts, and despairing of an issue to their cause, not to mention the just apprehension that all their property would soon be absorbed by the expenses, consented, notwithstanding the sentence of one of the courts in their favor, that the money remaining in the court's treasury, should be equally divided between them and the claimant. The inconveniencies created by the privilege of sequestration are innumerable and wide spread; nor can this custom be too severely reprehended: it should be observed, that the judges are paid by stated fees, which are generally considered as extremely limited, yet there is scarcely one of them who has not amassed considerable wealth since the island has been in our hands. To sum up this imperfect, though true sketch of the tribunals, it will be necessary shortly to advert to the *Audienza*, the only check provided by the constitution of the island against the injustice and corruption of the courts. It is evident that on the probity, legal knowledge, and impartiality of the members who compose this

must chiefly depend the people's happiness. Whether the present extraordinary and unconstitutional mode of conducting the above assembly is likely to give satisfaction to the public, or render them the least benefit, may be judged from the following account of its sittings, and those who compose it.

On every Monday morning throughout the year, holidays excepted, all the natives and other residents who have cause of complaint, assemble at the seat of government, in Valetta, where the civil commissioner, aided by the two public secretaries, and paymaster of the forces preside, for the purpose of examining the petitions that may be presented, and promptly redressing injuries complained of. Without entering into a very detailed examination of the fact, it may be readily imagined by those who consider the various links which unite the constituted authorities in every country, how ill calculated this council is to fulfil the object for which it was at first intended. There is scarcely an instance upon record, of the complainant's having received the smallest benefit from an appeal to the auditors: for in cases of every kind the petition is handed to the pro-secretary, and from him referred to the very tribunal complained of; or returned soon after to the presenter, with a memorandum in Latin, expressive of his Excellency the Governor's intention with respect to its contents. It also very often occurs, that the auditors themselves are indirectly con-

cerned in the objects of complaint; or owing to their being the principal members of the executive, few occurrences take place, without their having at least had the previous means of knowing the nature of them. It is, on the other hand, by no means likely to suppose, that the civil commissioner would take the trouble, if he had even the necessary time, to wade through the immense number of representations in Italian, which are made weekly. From the state of the tribunals it is unnecessary to add, that the Hall of Justice in the Palace where *the Audienza* assemble, is very much crowded.

The number and professional ignorance of the law practitioners here are proverbial; caused as much by the increase of litigation, as by the continent being no longer open to those who were formerly enabled to obtain a proper professional education at the universities of Italy. There is no seminary either here, or in Sicily, wherein students can be effectually prepared for this complicated and arduous profession; thus you daily see persons of the most ignorant description engage in the law, where it would seem that chicanery and fraud are sufficient to supply the want of honesty and talent.

As connected with the administration of justice, the prisons of this island deserve to be noticed. The one destined for convicts sentenced for a period of years, is built close to the Naval Hospital, and being a large building, a part of it

is devoted to the reception of French prisoners. From the hospital being placed much higher than the prison, it cannot but be continually impregnated with the effluvia which arise from this receptacle. With respect to the convicts they lead a life of the greatest inactivity at present; whereas, during the Grand Master's time, constant employment was given to them, in keeping the harbour clear, and clearing the streets, &c. As the greater part of these delinquents are confined for crimes which in England would be punished with death, many have observed that the ends of justice would be more amply filled, if they were sent to the island of Lampadosa; where, in colonizing that little interesting spot, an important service would be rendered to Malta, in establishing the proposed fishery upon a proper footing, and cultivating the land so well adapted in every respect for speedy improvement. Under the *Castelania*, a magnificent structure where the courts are held, there is an inferior prison for the incarceration of vagrants, and those convicted of breaches of the peace, &c. To give an idea of the way in which this is conducted, it is only necessary to observe, that it fronts one of the most public streets in the capital; whilst the prisoners are permitted clamorously to petition passengers for money, and at the entrance there is a shop kept by the jailer. There is, besides, in another part of the *Castelania*, a place of confinement devoted to the higher class of delinquents, being a species of state prison.

The police of every country is an object of considerable importance; but in a fortress situated as this is, surrounded either by hostile or suspicious nations, it becomes still more a duty of the government, to check the ingress of strangers, and establish such other regulations for internal security as may insure the general tranquillity. In this place the president of the grand court has the sole management of the police; he is aided by an intendant and various subordinate officers. Those who come to Malta are obliged to present themselves at the Intendant's Office, and show their passport; after which, a permission of residence is obtained. That no very great restriction has been established for the prevention of foreigners of every country coming into the garrison is evident, from their great number and rapid increase within these last three years. There is, probably, no circumstance that has interfered so much with the prosperity of Malta, or created such a cause of dissatisfaction, as the indiscriminate influx of strangers; to them we may, in a great measure, attribute the enormous high prices of provisions, and exorbitant charges in renting houses: whereas, the benefits done to commerce by these people, bear no proportion whatever to the charge they have been to the public. It has been asserted, that the total number of strangers here is not less than thirty thousand; half that number in an island, the resources of which are chiefly derived from without, would

be more than sufficient greatly to enhance the price of every necessary of life; and politically considered, their continuance in a place of arms cannot be very eligible. The force of these observations is much more strongly impressed on the mind, when I add that there is no part of Europe to which so many persons of infamous character resort as Malta, particularly those who flock from Genoa, Albania, and Sicily, two-thirds of whom are generally without employment, or the means of existence: and have, consequently, recourse to a variety of depredations here. The civil commissioner, awakened by the universal complaints of the natives against the introduction of so many foreigners, has more than once issued a proclamation, which intimated that those who could not give very substantial reasons for wishing to remain in the island, should be forthwith sent away. This measure has never been productive of any other effect than a renewal of the permissions of residence, as in no instance has the *Presidente*, to whom it was intrusted to discriminate who ought to remain and go away, been known to send off above a very few individuals who were perhaps tired of remaining on the island. This point has now been arranged in a very different manner; as, by a late regulation, it is ordered that all strangers residing in Malta, shall pay a tax of one Spanish dollar every three months: this is certainly a very novel mode of augmenting the revenue; and although it will be doubtless ex-

tremely productive, I question whether it will either serve to better the condition of the island, or render our administration more dignified in the eyes of other nations. While upon this topic it may not be irrelevant to observe, that several Maltese who departed voluntarily with the French, have been permitted to re-enter the island latterly, and some are even employed in public situations.

Whilst the Order was in being, the laws relative to the community of Jews were rather singular, and on some accounts, perhaps, justifiable. The hatred that has ever been directed against that sect, both by barbarous and civilized nations, is very remarkable, and to the philosopher who has never travelled beyond the precincts of his study, may appear as the effect of illiberality and prejudice; to those, however, who are more minutely acquainted with their true character, and that insatiable spirit of avaricious monopoly, which distinguish them so much, the case is very different; and though an enemy to every thing in the shape of religious or political persecution, candour obliges me to say, that those of the Jewish persuasion whom I have met with abroad, are influenced by principles and sentiments, with respect to other people, that never fail to draw on them a large share of obloquy, if not well merited contempt. These descendants of Abraham have, notwithstanding, an extraordinary talent of establishing themselves, and multiplying wherever

the authority of government is not seasonably interposed to prevent it. To guard against an evil of that kind, the Order of St. John made a rule of obliging every Jew who came to the island to give an exact account of his object in coming, &c.; his continuance was always limited to one month, and on going away, he was constrained to pay a fine of residence, which went into a fund for carrying on the war against the infidels. The Maltese, naturally averse to strangers, are particularly inimical to Jews, and are sadly annoyed at the thought of our permitting so many to settle here. Their number does not, however, exceed three thousand; but they have established synagogues, and consider themselves as very securely fixed here for the future. Their effect in promoting monopoly of every kind, more particularly in the commerce with Barbary, is very considerable.

Having little more to add relative to the laws of this island, I shall only trouble you with a few desultory remarks, suggested by the interesting subjects which I have thus attempted in some measure to elucidate.

It is the peculiar misfortune of most countries, in those days, that the persons who possess patronage and power view things in so favorable a light, that however important or necessary a change may become, they invariably consider it as superfluous, and consequently oppose every measure tending to abridge their influence or emolu-

ment. It is to this principle of self love, that we might probably trace the continuance of the greatest abuses in some of the most civilized countries of Europe; and while such feelings actuate those who are, by every rational duty, bound to promote the public happiness, it is on the other hand natural for the friends of humanity to adopt a very different mode of thinking, and they are even called upon, not only to deprecate every practice calculated to impede their fellow creature's prosperity, but to point out those equitable means of amelioration, which may be easily resorted to for the benefit of the community at large.

An extraordinary inattention to the promotion of our own interests, is often evinced by nations as well as individuals. This observation may be applied to the state of affairs in Malta with great justice; as, without interfering in any manner with the fundamental laws of the island, a few temporary regulations, with respect to the administration of the civil and criminal courts, might have been established after the surrender of Valetta; by which all those evils that have pressed so heavily on the natives and English residents for many years, would have been easily avoided. The only argument ever offered against a change in the present system, is, that as the island is held by a capitulation, which guarantees the people's rights, and our keeping it is uncertain, we are not warranted in making any innovation whatever. Surely no compact, however solemn, can justify our toleration

of abuses which militate so powerfully against the interests and happiness of all the inhabitants, as those in Malta do. I am most willing to give the British ministry all the credit they deserve, for this forbearance, which some people are induced to consider as a sort of political virtue; but has it been their invariable rule to observe the same degree of delicacy towards other places? or if it has, does the adherence to a weak and indecisive policy in one possession, render it the more to be applauded in another? If it is an object of importance to consolidate our power in the Mediterranean, how can that be effected without securing the attachment of the inhabitants of those countries, which either accident or right of conquest, may have thrown into our possession? This desirable end cannot be better attained, than by promoting an assimilation of manners, disseminating a knowledge of the English language with more assiduity, and establishing such a system of legislation, as, in having for its model our own enviable and admirable constitution, will dispense to every one the blessings of civil liberty, and promote the practice of virtue. The demands of the Maltese are no less rational than just; they are even flattering to an Englishman; and as a recapitulation of the principal heads which compose their first petition to his Majesty, fully expresses all that ought to be said on the subject of their rights and expectations from the British govern-

ment, I transmit you a copy of them with this letter.*

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* "*To his Majesty, George III., King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and Ireland, &c. &c. &c.*

"We, the native inhabitants of Malta, and faithful subjects of your Majesty, our benign and elected sovereign, stimulated by the events which have occurred here during these ten years, totally opposite as they have been to the idea, a two years arduous blockade, no less than her wide spread fame, had led us to form of the great English nation, take the liberty most humbly to lay the following statement at the feet of your Majesty.

"That rare confidence and entire submission with which the Maltese demonstrated their attachment to the British government, by putting themselves under the orders of your Majesty's officers, notwithstanding the ample authority which was vested in them, gave to the subjects of your Majesty every reason to anticipate corresponding sentiments of honour and justice on their part; nevertheless, our hopes have in this respect been fatally delusive, and we have seen with regret our most sacred rights and important interests sacrificed to a sordid policy. A dishonourable capitulation concluded between the officers of your Majesty and the French garrison, in which we had not the smallest participation, sacrificed without necessity our property: obliged to lay down our arms in the country when our enemies did so in the capital, we saw, with the most lively dissatisfaction, those very enemies loaded with the spoils of the whole island, and proudly insult the universal desolation of the people, who had for the preceding two years patiently suffered the accumulated evils of mortality, hunger, and incessant fatigue under the walls of Valetta.

"The privilege of holding the *Consiglio Popolari* was suspended immediately after the capital was reduced, although with a flattering promise from Sir A. Ball to the national representatives of its future reunion; from that moment the infelicity of our

This very reasonable memorial was transmitted about two years ago, with the signatures of above one hundred of the inhabitants, amongst whom

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situation has progressively increased; we daily feel more acutely the effect of its suppression; many persons of the first respectability, and unequivocal honesty, have been unjustly oppressed; memorials, founded upon the most reasonable claims, have repeatedly been passed by unnoticed; secret and improper influence has been exercised on the jurisdiction of the magistrates; several public functionaries have been displaced without the formality of investigation; deputations have been assumed by a few obscure individuals, amongst whom were some foreigners, for private purposes: these have addressed the government in the name of the people, without any other authority than the sanction of the civil commissioners; public institutions, hitherto devoted to objects of piety and the education of youth, and which were solemnly consecrated by our forefathers, have been occupied for very different purposes; various impositions and insults have not reached the seat of your Majesty's government, owing to its remoteness, and the fear of incurring the civil commissioner's resentment. Some people have falsely attributed to your Majesty's Maltese subjects a disposition to be unquiet; the ample privileges granted by our ancient sovereigns, our patient submission, and confidence in the justice of your Majesty, during a period of above ten years, afford to the world strong proofs of facts, instead of words, to confound our calumniators. In fact, many other acts of injustice might be cited, but prudence requires that we should not dwell upon them; a small portion of these are, however, deposited in the hands of Mr. Richards, of London: and, in filling up the measure of our sufferings, serve to show the justice of those suspicions which we have a right to entertain as to the future.

"To dissipate then those fears with respect to our future destinies, and increase those ties of ardent affection which we cherish towards the crown of your Majesty, we supplicate that

were included the principal nobility and gentry who had been most remarkable for their opposition to the French, and sincere attachment to the English; owing, however, to an informality in sending the petition, it was, I understand, returned, to be sent through the civil government here, as the official and proper channel for such a representation: this unexpected measure of the secretary of state disconcerted the Maltese very materially; and their apprehensions were still more

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your Majesty might be pleased to take our situation into your most gracious consideration, so that we may at length obtain the promised restitution of our ancient and dearest rights; by this your Majesty will gratify the hearts of a loyal and devoted people.

"These supplications, reduced to general terms, include our sacred and ancient rights, which were violated by the late Grand Masters of St. John, enjoyed by us during the blockade, and expressly stipulated for when the islands were given up to the officers of your Majesty. They were afterwards solemnly promised to us by the late Sir A. Ball and Mr. Cameron, both the representatives of your Majesty.

"1st. The principal of these rights is a free representation of the people, or *Consiglio Populari* (popular council), together with the privilege of sending deputies and memorials to your Majesty when requisite.

"2d. Independent tribunals.

"3d. A free, but not licentious press, on all points that cannot offend our religion.

"4th. A jury like that of England, or according to our ancient usage, with the right of appealing, in all cases, from the sentence of the judges to the popular assembly; in fine, a constitution uniting the spirit of our old free and legitimate government with that of Great Britain—saving, however, our religion," &c. &c.

increased on the publication of the civil commissioners' proclamation, which I also transmit to you,* in which they were characterized as "*a few turbulent and factious individuals.*" This document contained a variety of other expressions, which were by no means calculated to conciliate the persons alluded to; and, previous to the subsequent petition being framed, in a more modified form, several of those who had put their names to the former, although holding situations under the civil government, were deprived of them; others, apprehensive of losing the means of supporting their families, were induced to recant; so that the second representation, forwarded through the present civil commissioners, though differing very little from the first, had not so many signatures. Those who signed it were, however, persons of great respectability; and it should be observed, that all the nobility renewed their signatures.

The case of the Chevalier Parisi, a member of one of the first families in the island, and whose conduct during the siege was distinguished by the approbation of all our commanders, which led to his appointment to the command of the Maltese provincial corps, has excited a considerable sensation, having, as it is said, in consequence of signing the petition, been suspended from his command without any trial.

* Vide Appendix.

Mr. Vincenzo Borg, of whom the public have already heard so much, is one of the most arduous patriots in Malta; his great services during the blockade, and his pecuniary sacrifices, for which he has never been remunerated, entitle this gentleman to every praise; having, however, been said to have incurred a late civil commissioner's displeasure by his solicitude for a restoration of the national rights, he has since by some been regarded as a suspicious character, although it is universally allowed that there is not a more exemplary or benevolent man in the island. Many more persons of the highest merit might be mentioned amongst those who are anxious for a reform; but as the introduction of their names here can have no influence in promoting their wishes, it is unnecessary to dwell any longer on merits which will doubtless, sooner or later, be appreciated by the British government.

Leaving this subject, then, to its own merits, I shall proceed, in my next letter, to the discussion of various other points, connected with this island's welfare; and though you need not expect a more methodical or detailed narrative than the foregoing, it will be my study to unite utility with amusement.

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* This state paper will be found in the Appendix, and is highly deserving the reader's attention.

LETTER III.

Ou est la profit, la est la gloire. VOLTAIRE.

Hopes of Profit from Malta not realized—Injudicious commercial Grants to Foreigners—American Intercourse—Frauds respecting Licenses, Papers, &c.—Political and commercial Anecdotes—Shameful Conduct of Privateers—Honourable Conduct of British resident Merchants—Vice-Admiralty-Court—Representations of the British Merchants on the Subject of Bills and Specie—Naval Establishment at Malta—Dock-yard—Victualling Office—Office of Ordnance—Hospitals—Revenues of Malta—Their Administration—Public Establishments—Quarantine Department.

Malta, 1812.

WHEN Malta first fell into our hands, the event was hailed by commercial men, as one of the most propitious that had taken place for many years, and as promising to the British mercantile interests in this country, advantages of the most permanent and solid nature. A variety of causes has, however, prevented either of these seemingly well-grounded hopes from being realized; and there is probably no part of his Majesty's dominions in which more general embarrassment has been felt, or fewer fortunes made, than this. The

uncertainty of our retaining it, in the first instance, prevented many from settling in the island; and when declared a free port, in 1800, we at once opened to our enemies much greater sources of profit than we ourselves could ever derive from the island's commerce. How far the subjects of foreign powers have benefitted by that ill-timed measure, as yet unrepealed, will appear hereafter.

Independent of many other circumstances which are known to influence the pursuits of commerce, it ought to be premised, that its success must chiefly depend on the existence of equitable laws, and their faithful execution. Without these, it is in vain for a merchant to look for an accumulation of wealth, except by the intervention of those fortuitous events, that result oftener from accident than any other cause; but that the laws of this place have tended rather to the suppression of commerce than to its support, may easily be conceived after a perusal of the foregoing letters. The marked hostility of the Maltese judges in a late instance seems to have called forth the just indignation of all the British residents. The points in dispute, which gave rise to the highly improper communication from the former to Lieutenant-general Oakes; and on the other side, an excellent refutation from the merchants, are so clearly detailed in these documents, which I herewith transmit you, that I am sure you will read them with considerable attention, and with full conviction.*

* Vide Appendix.

The unlimited permission granted to the subjects of our enemy to import articles of continental produce and manufacture, has, for some years, nearly superseded the sale of those of England, owing to their being sold at a much cheaper rate: they have consisted principally of the following: viz. linen and woollen cloths, hardware and cutlery of every kind, glass and earthen-ware, manufactured silks, copper, vitriol, copperas, household furniture in immense quantities, iron, leather, tobacco, German muslins, and printed calicoes, red and white lead, spirits, &c., &c. These articles have, besides, been imported either in enemies' vessels or neutrals; from this place, a great portion of them have been exported to Sicily, the Morea, Constantinople, and the coast of Barbary; and the chief part of the Maltese have bought them in preference to English goods. The evil has been, of course, most severely felt by our merchants; and the draft of a letter* representing the hardships of the case was made out by six of the principal merchants; and although, from some cause or another, it was never presented, it serves to illustrate the facts related above. The exigencies of the present war, and our extraordinary position with regard to the continental powers, would surely have amply justified those restrictions on imports, which must have substituted the fruits of British labour for that of other

* See Appendix.

countries, many of which have been in a state of war with us for several years.

An extensive intercourse with America has also operated as another check to the commerce of Malta; and while the ports of that nation were shut against English ships, a mistaken and temporizing policy on our side has permitted vessels under their flag to supply all the markets of the Mediterranean, not excepting ourselves, with colonial and East India produce. As to the licence trade, it has been carried on here to the utmost extent, and, with few exceptions, been remarkably injurious to the British interests: innumerable frauds have been continually detected, and several examples made by the vice-admiralty court; so that, in consequence of the measures which have been lately adopted, a hope is entertained that the English government will no longer be subject to those various and shameful impositions that have occurred here since their establishment.

The extreme facility with which foreigners of every description have been enabled to procure Mediterranean passes, together with permission to hoist the English flag, has been another source of incalculable mischief, and is certainly very inconsistent with sound policy. There are at this moment no less than eight hundred vessels registered here for passes, and liberty of wearing our flag; but of these there are not one-tenth manned with English subjects; being, with the exception of a few hundred Maltese and Sicilians, invariably

navigated either by Genoese, Italians, Greeks, or Albanians.

It was the original intention of the British government, that all vessels procuring the above privilege should have their captains and one-third of the crew subjects of his Britannic Majesty. This necessary regulation has been disregarded in almost every instance; and numbers of ships, although, when in the harbours of Malta bearing the British flag, have been detected going into enemy's ports when in a state of blockade; and others have even supplied Corfu with corn. The licensed vessels have been obliged, previous to obtaining their pass, to stipulate, that they would take on board a proportion of colonial produce and English manufactures, which were to be sold at an enemy's ports, and the return cargo brought to Malta; but this has been evaded in a thousand instances. It is also a singular fact, that subjects of every nation have, through the agency of several English and Maltese merchants, been enabled to procure passes, and simulated papers, totally contrary to the spirit of the Orders in Council. Upon that subject, many persons here, who were considered as men of respectability, have been discovered to have lent their names to the nominal proprietorship of vessels in which they had no share; and as yet I have not heard of a single example having been made of one of these people, although the act was little better than one of premeditated perjury.

The Greek ships, from different parts of the Archipelago and the Morea, have been actively employed in the above species of fraud; and, I am sorry to say, imposed most successfully on the credulity of the civil government; one or two instances will illustrate their mode of acting.

The ship Epaminondas, of Spezzia, in the Morea, Antonio Panajotti rea owner and master; Edward Carlton,* of Malta, nominal owner; Paolo Recca, a Maltese, nominal captain of the colours; left Leghorn a few months since, under the Greek flag, with a valuable cargo of French cloths, silks, caps, &c., and came to this place, where her papers were simulated, and she obtained *a British letter of marque*, after which she proceeded to Smyrna, and sold her cargo!

Another Greek vessel, whose name I do not recollect, procured papers here; and took on board the captain of colours, who was a Maltese, together with part of her cargo, to be disposed of in a French port, and then she was of course to return here. She went to Leghorn, sold the cargo, and received dollars in return for it: with these on board, she sailed towards this place. When off the island of Sardinia, the master and crew, all of whom are interested in this kind of ships, held a consultation, in which they determined, that, instead of entering Malta, the captain of the

* This gentleman holds a situation of emolument and responsibility under the English body of merchants.

colours should be forthwith thrown overboard, and, assuming their own colours, to return to the Morea, where the profits of the voyage were to be shared—while this scheme was in agitation, a Maltese privateer fortunately hove in sight, gave chase, and came up shortly, upon which, the terrified master related the circumstance that had just occurred; the vessel was immediately seized, and brought in here for condemnation. With respect to the character of the modern Greeks, although not materially connected with my object, I cannot help observing in this place, that they possess all the sanguine ferocity of their ancestors without a particle of their refinement.

The above is an exact picture of the license and Mediterranean pass system: that of privateering, no less remarkable, is next to be noticed. There have generally, during the present war, been from thirty to forty of these vessels belonging to Malta, and the whole number, with very few exceptions, the property of Genoese and Albanian adventurers; who, by some means or other, have been permitted to domiciliate in the island. As a source of injury to the national character of Great Britain, and commerce in general, nothing can possibly equal the nefarious conduct of those who sail in privateers. The number of Maltese, (for no Englishmen ever embark in them,) is comparatively trifling; and by far the greatest part of their crews, not excepting the captains, are persons who have alternately served under our flag,

and that of France, as may have best suited the occasion. The innumerable outrages, and daring piracies, committed by the Maltese privateers, would fill a large volume. It is a fact, beyond contradiction, that many of these lawless adventurers are sustained when cruizing, either by plundering vessels, no matter of what nation, or landing on the coasts of the enemy, or of neutrals, and seizing whatever they can find. Their depredations have lately been confined to the Adriatic; where, amongst the defenceless islands on the coast of Dalmatia, the most shocking acts of barbarity have been committed. The conduct of several privateers' crews, lately, has been particularly hurtful to the commerce of Malta, and ruinous to many individuals: it is a positive fact, that a number of vessels, laden with naval stores, have been detained, in the ports of Fiume and Bucari, lest, on their passage to this place, they should be seized by privateers bearing our flag, it having become a common practice with the masters of these vessels to detain all ships that have a licence on board, as there is scarcely ever any one in them who understands the English language, and, at all events, when in the port of Malta, the owners are enabled to intimidate them into an accommodation, by threatening a trial at the vice-admiralty court, which is usually attended with an enormously heavy expense.

We have certainly a navy sufficiently powerful to maintain that enviable superiority already ac-

quired, without suffering the British character to be tarnished by tolerating such ruinous auxiliaries; and their entire suppression is not only rendered necessary on political grounds, but would be most serviceable to the general interests of commerce. In closing this subject it affords me much satisfaction to observe, that the English merchants resident in Malta have, with the exception of a few instances, abstained from speculating in privateers the greater part of which belong to Genoese, Greeks, and Albanians, who for the most part have been driven out of their own countries, and found in Malta a refuge which they would be denied on any part of the continent: the easy permission granted these people to settle here, has long been a source of the greatest complaint amongst the Maltese, and when their characters are recollected, together with the limited resources of the island, this jealousy and disapprobation must be considered as very natural.

As the manner of conducting the vice-admiralty court* at this place has been already illustrated in England, it will be only necessary for me to detail a few prominent facts, as calculated to confirm the public opinion, and at the same time shew the neces-

* Those who may be desirous of becoming more intimately acquainted with the personal qualifications of the members of the vice-admiralty court here, are referred to a poem lately sent out from England, entitled "The Ten Honest Lawyers," and containing in very excellent versification, a number of ludicrous traits.

sity of a radical reform in this highly important branch of legal administration in Malta. Your reference to one of the papers transmitted herewith,* will discover some facts particularly interesting; if you have not had an opportunity of seeing the documents produced by Lord Cochrane in the House of Commons, and although that patriotic and gallant officer's exertions have not been crowned with success, his Lordship's efforts are not the less intitled to public gratitude; his suggestions will, however, it is hoped, produce the desired effect on some future occasion. Amongst the many abuses connected with the admiralty court, none appears to be more nefarious or tending to the injury of British subjects than that which I am about to expose.

When the fate of Austria was decided by the disastrous treaty of Presburg, and amongst her various other cessions, she lost her maritime ports, in the Adriatic, a great number of the imperial vessels flew to this place for protection; many were detained by orders from the British government, and the whole became anxious to trade under the English flag, a privilege totally incompatible with the navigation act, except under particular restrictions, one of which requires that vessels of foreign construction are to pay heavy additional duties for entering the ports of the united kingdom; whereas captured enemy's vessels regu-

* Vide Appendix.

larly condemned by an admiralty court, are by law intitled to all the advantages of British bottoms. Some merchants here, regardless of those principles of honor by which commerce can alone be a source of public benefit, determined to obtain by fraud that which could not be effected in any other manner; and it is positively asserted that the condemnations of several small French vessels were transferred to large Austrian ships, which thereby became *bona fide* British. In order, however, to establish this right, the concurrence of the vice-admiralty court became absolutely necessary, and before the certificate of registry was granted for any vessel, one of condemnation was first given by the judge, in which the deputy marshall of the court was directed and authorized to repair on board all condemned vessels, and give a minute description of their length, breadth, &c., after which they were intitled to a register, but on no account before. It will scarcely be credited that under such legal provisions, of the most important legislative act in the British empire, an abuse so glaring as the above should have been permitted to exist; yet such was unquestionably the fact, and in order to remove any doubts upon a matter of so much importance, I have transmitted you* the copies of two original documents

* Vide Appendix.

which will amply illustrate the truth of my assertions.*

The conduct of our merchants here has, generally speaking, been marked with a considerable degree of energy. Those little-minded jealousies which follow us into all our foreign possessions, have not, however, increased the property of Malta; nor can it be denied, that an undue influence and extensive spirit of monopoly, have frequently cramped the best endeavours of industry. The formation of an insurance company and bank, amongst other institutions calculated to promote commerce, have been sources of the greatest utility. Upon the subject of supplying government with specie, a warm controversy and extensive difference of opinion has prevailed. Incapable of forming a decisive judgment upon a question of such magnitude, it will be sufficient for my purpose to state the facts which have occurred in the money market.

On the 28th of October, 1809, nearly the whole body of British merchants established here, addressed the following letter to the civil commissioner.

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* Since writing the above, a cause has been actually tried in the court of exchequer, Penny *v.* Wilson, Allardyce, and others, merchants at Malta, when the fact of the San Antonio, named in the certificate, having obtained a register in the way alluded to, was unequivocally proved and the ship condemned.

SIR,

We, the undersigned British merchants residing in the city of La Valetta, take the liberty of calling your Excellency's attention, to the system of negotiating public bills of the commissariat of this island, which is by the commissary general, fixing an exchange, at which he is willing to grant bills. The terms in general are not in a just proportion, with the value of money in the place, and greatly under the exchange for unexceptionable commercial paper; the consequence of which system is, that the commissary general can obtain little or no money on those conditions, and the wants of the government increasing, he is obliged to sacrifice very largely to meet the necessities of the department by negotiating in private, on very unfavorable terms. Immediately such private negotiation has been concluded, he again fixes the exchange at the same rate it was before, thus of course, most completely excluding the possibility of procuring money except by a recurrence to a private negotiation, which has lately taken place in several instances.

It may be said the wants of government are urgent and it would be dangerous to make them known; this we can in a great measure refute, as the other public departments, by advertising for money, obtain it on much more advantageous terms. The naval agent victualler on or about the 18th instant, passed his bills in this manner for £10,000 at 61½*d.* per dollar; in short we have

only to refer your Excellency (that you may be convinced of what we assert,) to the different departments for the course of exchange obtained by their public advertisements.

We beg leave also to represent to your Excellency, that the present system of negotiation, preventing a fair and open competition among the merchants, is highly injurious to the commerce of this place, owing to their not having generally a free and equal access for the purchase of bills on the treasury; and if followed up must ever be done at a great sacrifice of public money, as will more fully appear, by comparing the course at which the Commissary general has made these private negotiations with the enclosed statement of the commercial exchange, from the 1st of May, to the present time. And we are firmly of opinion that he could by allowing such open competition, even for so large a sum as *two hundred thousand pounds sterling*, have procured the money on much more advantageous terms than he has done.

We do therefore most earnestly submit to your Excellency's consideration, whether it would not be more desirable for the benefit of the public service to allow a fair and open competition to the commercial interest generally to tender for the bills of the commissariat department, in the same manner as practised hitherto by the other public departments.

We have the honor, &c.

Signed by Forty-two Merchants.

INCLOSURE.

I the underwritten director of the commercial rooms of this city do hereby certify, that having taken the needful information from several of the principal merchants and brokers here resident, I find the following to have been the state of the exchange on London for unexceptionable bills, from the 1st of May, to the 31st of October, 1809.

From 1st of May, 1809, to the 18th, 56½*d.* to 58*d.* per Dollar.

20th	May, ...	30th, 60	.	61	do.
1st	June, ...	30th, 60	.	61	do.
1st	July, ...	31st, 59	.	60	do.
1st	Aug., ...	31st, 61	.		do.
1st	Sept., ...	30th, 60	.	61	do.
1st	Oct., ...	31st, 61	.		do.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of these rooms in Valetta, the 1st day of November, 1809.

(Signed,) J. SLYTHE, *Director.*

One would imagine that the reasons alleged in this communication, must have led to that degree of impartiality so necessary for the mutual benefit of the government and the public; yet singular as the fact may appear, the commissariat with few exceptions has continued to raise money, upon terms similar to those stated ever since; while the other departments have had recourse to no other means than those pointed out in the letter. The association of six merchants, who have generally bought the Commissary general's

bills has excited a great degree of dissatisfaction here, and not unaptly been designated the *Cabal*: it is asserted, and I believe with great truth, that these conscientious gentlemen have, in the negotiation of government bills alone, made large fortunes: a late occurrence of this kind will give some idea of their general plan. Knowing that the Commissary general at Messina was about to negotiate for a large sum, when the exchange here was much lower, one of the members went off to Sicily by express, and arriving at the British head quarters in time to make his offer, he concluded a bargain with Mr. Burgman, to the amount of several hundred thousand dollars at the exorbitant exchange of 74d. per Spanish dollar, when at Malta it might have been done for about twenty per cent. lower. There are several interested individuals here, who maintain that it would be impossible for the commissariat to obtain the necessary sums without having recourse to this mode; while the generality of the merchants flatly deny it: the only effectual method of obviating the above inconveniences would be that of government sending a periodical sum of money both to Malta, and Sicily. That would serve to keep the exchange from fluctuating in the way it does now, and enable the commissary to observe a rigid impartiality in his future transactions. Although there are other causes in existence, which tend to depress trade very considerably in this island, those already mentioned are amongst

the most important; it is therefore self evident that until the laws are revised, every species of monopoly diminished, if not destroyed, and that commerce in general shall excite the unceasing solicitude of the civil government, little hopes of its resuscitation, if the expression may be used, can be entertained by the inhabitants.

The importance and extent of our naval establishments here will be a sufficient excuse for troubling you with a short account of them. The dock-yard is situated at the extremity of one of the creeks which forms the grand port, and though much has been done for its improvement, it is yet susceptible of considerable changes, that would render the place infinitely more convenient. It is by far too confined, and on this account the propriety of taking in a large space of ground extending to the right, has been often suggested. There is also a large building at the upper end of the creek, built under the auspices of Sir A. Ball, and intended for a market-place; but which, from its vicinity to the arsenal, is said to be much better calculated for a naval store, as the harbour has shown a disposition to fill up here. It was lately proposed by the builder of the dock-yard, that the excavations from the new dock constructing under his direction, should be deposited at the head of the creek, for the purpose of deepening the water, and of removing the very unhealthy effluvia occasioned by its stagnancy at present; but this highly useful proposition was rejected by the adminis-

trators of public property, as interfering with their jurisdiction, although its utility was evident.

During the Order's government, a number of convicts were kept continually employed in clearing the harbour, and in preventing the shallowness occasioned by the quantities of mud which are so apt to accumulate in different parts of it; that practice has been discontinued for some time, and that labour, which while it satisfied public justice became useful to the community, has been suffered to remain in idleness and inactivity; should it be found inexpedient to employ these persons again, recourse may be had to the floating steam-engine as used in several of the English ports. The superintendance of this important work belongs more properly to the harbour-master, an office which was created by the late Sir A. Ball, then civil commissioner, with a capital house and good salary attached to it; but the recent appointment of the person who occupies that situation, to an office for registering foreign ships, by Lieutenant General Oakes, must in a great measure interfere with his more important avocations afloat, if not prevent their exercise altogether. Ministers are entitled to much praise for having lately procured a grant from parliament, to be employed in constructing a dock here fit to receive our largest ships; the execution of this spirited work has been confided to Mr. Bray* master-builder, than

* Since the above was written, Mr. Bray has paid the debt of

whom a more persevering or meritorious officer could not have been chosen; he has also the merit of having been the principal promoter of this design, although warmly opposed by those prejudices, which but too often check the progress of genius, and deprive the public of important benefits. The patronage with which he has been honored from a distinguished personage at the navy board† has enabled Mr. Bray to surmount all the obstacles that were thrown in his way, here, even by persons in his own department, and a rapid progress has already been made in the dock. Many persons have pretended that its construction in a place, the tenure of which is uncertain, was inconsistent with sound policy; but this is amongst

nature, and the public lost a most valuable servant. The peculiar manner in which his death was occasioned has considerably embittered that melancholy event to his friends; for being on a sailing party about the middle of last September, the boat in which he was, filled, and before any effectual assistance could be afforded he was suffocated. No moment could have been more unfortunate for such an event, for the progress of the dock, in the short space of three months, was such as to exceed his most sanguine expectations, and those of the public; to the well known merits of this officer it ought to be added, that he was the constant companion of the gallant Sir S. Smith, at the memorable siege of St. Jean d' Acre; where British valour experienced such a triumph. In his letter to Lord Nelson, dated on board the Tigre, off Mount Lebanon, June 16th, 1799, Sir Sidney pays a just tribute to the exertions of Mr. Bray, by observing that he was "one of the bravest and most intelligent men he ever met with."

† The worthy comptroller Sir T. B. Thompson.

those opinions that many people are so apt to make, who argue from confined views of the subject. Since our first possession of Malta, it has been necessary to keep a large fleet in the Mediterranean; at this moment, the number of men of war inside the straits of Gibraltar exceeds one hundred and twenty; of these, several are annually in want of being docked, either from accidents or natural causes; where the only substitute for that, at present, is careening, or heaving down, an operation which is attended with a great loss of time and very heavy expence, besides innumerable inconveniences of another description well known to naval men. In fact so many accidents have happened whenever ships have been hove down, that it is now only resorted to in cases of the greatest necessity; and ships are frequently sent to sea in a dangerous condition, rather than they should go through the above operation.* The exigency of the service is also generally a bar to any considerable delay in port; and as to sending

* The impolicy of keeping our ships of war out in foreign countries too long, has been frequently pointed out as injurious to the seamen's interests; a remarkable instance has occurred very lately of its impropriety in other respects; for his Majesty's ship Topaze was found to be in so bad a state, that she would never bear heaving down, and was sent to England with a convoy; while on the passage, she met with several heavy gales, and arrived safe by a miracle, for the pumps were kept going night and day; it was even necessary to flap her round with cables to prevent her falling to pieces.

ships home when in want of being docked, that has always been found to be impracticable, from the great number continually required to guard the different naval stations in this country. Although it can hardly be necessary to add any thing more in support of the proposition for a dock, I ought to observe that the expenses attending its completion are objects of minor consideration, when compared to its amazing utility, and that those who have made that an objection, should have recollected that the profits arising from suffering transports and large merchant ships to enter, when unoccupied by men of war, would shortly reimburse government for a great proportion of the monies expended.

The principal officers of the yard, in addition to their salaries, are allowed excellent quarters; those for the builder, master-attendant, and storekeeper, are in its immediate neighbourhood; but the commissioner has a magnificent palace allotted to him in Valetta. It is very natural for every man to wish for an increase of his domestic comforts: this desire is, however, very frequently carried beyond reasonable limits by persons in the employ of government, thus unnecessarily increasing the public expenditure; the continued and numerous embellishments which have been added to the dwellings of the above offices, are a proof of this. It is even asserted, that several workmen from the yard used formerly to be employed upon jobs, which had no relation whatever

to the naval service. The agency of Greenwich Hospital has, by a recent change, been conferred on the store-keeper; it is a place the emoluments of which entirely depend on the attention devoted to it by the agent, as he gets five per cent. upon all the money that passes through his hands; now it may be of the greatest importance to the interests of the naval yard here to observe, that the duties of the store-keeper are generally more than any one person can properly attend to; yet Mr. West holds this troublesome situation, which, although he is obliged to keep a clerk of the yard constantly employed in it, interferes most materially with his other avocations.

We have not as yet availed ourselves of half those resources which might be drawn from the surrounding countries, partly owing to the state of the war, but much more so to bad management. Larger quantities of timber might, with the utmost facility, be procured from the Adriatic, Albania, the Morea, and even Caramania, which has not been yet tried; but the charge of getting it hitherto has unfortunately fallen upon persons who were, above all others, the worst calculated to succeed in any undertaking that required a talent for negotiation. In one instance, which occurred within my own recollection, and while Captain Percy Frazer was naval commissioner here, there were above thirty thousand dollars embarked on board a foreign merchant ship, intrusted to the care of a Mr. Laird, who had been British consul at Ragusa: that gentle-

man proceeded to Durazzo, where, having quarrelled with the Pacha, he was put under an arrest; so that not above two or three cargoes at most have come from that port, whereas the money sent was nearly sufficient to purchase a whole forest. At another time, and while Commissioner F. was here, there was a person sent to the Morea, for the purpose of examining the quality of the timber there: he was an Englishman, totally unacquainted with the language; and set out from Petrass, determined, if possible, to execute the object of his mission; he was, however, scarcely three days absent when he lost his way; and being most severely beaten by the savage natives, he saved his life with difficulty, and returned to Malta as wise as he went.

In this, as well as other respects, we require a new system of design and execution. There are many places in the Mediterranean, besides those above mentioned, that can abundantly contribute to the support of the British navy. From large frigates downwards to every subordinate class of vessels might be constructed at Malta, much cheaper than in England; and composed of the finest timber. It has often surprized me that the Navy Board should be at the heavy expense and trouble of sending gun-boats in frame out here, while they can be built, either in Malta or Sicily, for one-third less money than the wood costs at home.

The Victualling Office is contiguous to the

dock-yard, and admirably calculated for all the purposes of expedition and convenience. The manner in which this department has been conducted for many years has, owing to some recent discoveries, attracted a good deal of notice here; but, notwithstanding the abrupt removal of the late agent victualler, Mr. Wilkie, who had been a servant of the public for above forty years, and served his Majesty with the most distinguished honour, it has been clearly ascertained, that all the irregularities that have occurred in this office are of a nature which do not in any manner implicate the above-named gentleman, having principally originated with some person in a different department, who, by a late arrangement, acquired an influence with it hitherto unknown, and perhaps unnecessary. As an ample inquiry has been instituted into the concerns of this important office, it would be altogether superfluous to extend my remarks on the subject, although I cannot help expressing a hope, that those who have been detected as the instruments of corruption will shortly be brought to that punishment they so justly merit.

During the late civil commissioner's administration, his flag as rear-admiral was flying in the Grand Port; and in addition to his other numerous charges, his Excellency superintended all the naval concerns of the island. Since his decease, no flag officer has been permanently stationed here; a circumstance which has most materially im-

peded the public service, as the senior officer for the time being is entirely unequal to the task of making those arrangements required for the facilities of commerce, and the various dispositions of the naval force, with that degree of promptness generally required; his own peculiar situation, coming here merely to refit the ship he commands, interferes considerably with the impartiality that ought to mark his proceedings; nor can he use the degree of authority necessary to keep the different public departments in proper order. The permanent establishment of an admiral possessing any talents for business, and of conciliatory manners, would be of the most extensive utility here, as tending to prevent many abuses, and eminently promote the interests of commerce.

With respect to the general internal regulation of the naval arsenal, that is an object particularly worthy of inquiry: the detection of those abuses connected with its administration belongs to a higher power; and the present commissioner* has, for many months, had an ample scope for his zeal and activity in bringing to light some practices, as disgraceful to the parties concerned as they were injurious to the public.

The Naval Hospital, though by no means so eligibly situated as it might be, is remarkably well administered, under the care of Mr. Allen, the prin-

* Captain J. Larcom, who is said to be as estimable in private life as he is a distinguished ornament of his profession.

cipal surgeon. It was some years ago in contemplation to remove this establishment to the opposite side of the Grand Port, where there is a spacious and airy building, which, with some repairs, might be made a most capital receptacle for the naval sick. It cannot be from motives of economy that this desirable work has been suspended, as in the military departments of the island every improvement, as well as alteration, hitherto proposed has not failed to be put into prompt execution.

The Office of Ordnance, although equally connected with the army, is too conspicuous to be passed by unnoticed; but with respect to this department, there is little to be observed, except that it is totally impossible for any public establishment to be conducted with greater propriety or uniform activity; indeed, the facility with which his Majesty's ships are supplied, and the unremitting attention of the respective officers, cannot be too highly applauded.

There are few men of science in the military art who appear to agree in their ideas of perfection as to the best mode of fortifying a place. Now, with respect to Malta, which has always been cited as impregnable, a number of most expensive and laborious alterations have been continually made by the engineer department. In a late instance, many people were surprized to see above a hundred soldiers employed in making deep excavations opposite the *Albergo de Castillia*, which is,

unquestionably the most unassailable part of this fortress. On inquiry, I found that the angle of the parapet wanted to be lowered, and the breast-work was not high enough. It was added, that a new commanding officer had been lately appointed to the engineers.*

It has repeatedly, and with great justice, been asked, why Great Britain, under her own financial difficulties, should persist in expending so many millions on possessions, the revenues of which, if judiciously managed, are more than sufficient for their own entire support. This ruinous practice, although originating in the most liberal policy ever adopted by any nation, will, I trust, be soon finally exploded. It may probably be said by the Maltese, that we have not done them that degree of justice, in not restoring their late civil and political rights, which they had reason to expect from a free nation like Great Britain, and which their attachment towards us entitled them to obtain; yet they cannot but recollect that we rescued them from

* In having thus introduced this important department, I beg it may not be supposed that any reflection is meant to be thrown on the talents or zeal of Colonel Dickens, who happens to be absent on leave; that officer's long services, and excellent public and private character, are well known to his Majesty's government; and although, in common with all those who know him, it would give me infinite satisfaction to hear of his removal to a situation more suited to his merits, the society of Malta would suffer a most serious loss in being deprived of a family no less distinguished for amiableness of manners than unlimited hospitality.

the yoke of a ferocious and tyrannical enemy, who would have gladly annihilated, if possible, the whole population. This is a truth which should ever be engraven on their hearts; and I am certain, if, on the one hand, they are dissatisfied with our local administration of affairs in the island, there is not, on the other, a single native, possessing a talent of political reflection, who does not feel a due degree of gratitude towards the British government for all that has been done of a nature to benefit their condition.

On the Order's suspension, or rather the arrival of Buonaparte, in 1798, a vital blow was given to the revenues of the island, which had for a long period been falling to ruin; yet, by a calculation transmitted to the Treasury in 1802, the total amount of all the funds exceeded £287,000 annually.* Since that period, many of those heads, which constituted the revenue then, have experienced a

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* The following calculation, copied from Mr. Eaton's works, gives a very favourable picture of the Maltese revenue; yet, how does it happen that large sums are annually drawn upon his Majesty's Treasury for the island's support? This question will, I trust, soon occupy the serious attention of government.

Annual revenue		£287,765 0 0
Annual expence of the civil establishment	£57,882	
Pay and maintenance of the ordinary garrison of 5000 British troops, allowing	125,000	
The annual surplus will be . . .	104,883	
		£287,765 0 0

progressive and considerable increase, particularly those of the Custom-house and the tax on wine; there has also been a larger sum derived from the letting out of public property that consists of lands and houses, though not one-third so much as might have been realized, as they have generally been let for less than a tenth of their value, when compared to the rates of rent in general. There are a number of stores and dwelling-houses let at this moment to persons who have no claim whatever on the indulgence of the civil government, for twenty and thirty pounds per annum, for which three hundred might be procured.

In the country there are a number of houses, with lands attached to them, neither let or occupied; these, if disposed of to industrious individuals, would become a new source of revenue. The military quarters are the finest in Europe; and it is said that those kept for the use of his Majesty's troops are fit to contain double the number of men generally composing this garrison. Nothing can exceed the jealousy caused by the partiality which has been hitherto observed in the disposal of government lands and houses.

Amongst the new impositions which have only been laid on very lately, is a duty of a half per cent. on all goods and merchandize landed in quarantine, together with an additional port duty of two dollars per diem, to be paid by all vessels while unloading at the quarantine wharf; these are expected to be very productive. Another duty

of five per cent. is established on the sale of all ships purchased by foreigners; the Maltese and English residents paying two and a half: also a monthly poll-tax on carts and calisses, and one dollar every three months from each stranger who remains in the island.

The general revenues can never experience any great improvement while entrusted to the management of persons who are unacquainted with the exact nature of them: at present, the paymaster of the forces, a person totally unfit for the office, has been appointed, and continues to superintend them; his own situation is one of considerable emolument, and requires, as every one knows, both labour and attention to do it justice. How can he know any thing about the intricacies of Maltese finance? With every proper deference for Mr. Figers, I humbly conceive that the finances of this island will never be radically improved under his superintendance.

The *Administratori*, as they are called, consist of four Maltese, who are charged with the administration of the public property. A short account of these gentlemen will enable you to judge how far they are likely to benefit the public. Mr. Saleriano is a taylor by profession, and, while the French forces occupied Valetta, was one of the guards at the arsenal. Mr. Cesolani, a foreigner by birth, was formerly a soldier under the government of the Grand Masters. Mr. Cammileri, surnamed

Mezza Canna, is neither remarkable for his address nor talents. Mr. Michele is an exception to the other three, being an honest tradesman, distinguished by probity and virtue.

As composing a part of those who are more immediately concerned in the revenues, it is necessary to notice an institution of very old origin here, called the *Università;* this is administered by four *Jurats*, or magistrates, who superintend public education, regulate the markets, &c. and appropriate the funds of private individuals deposited in their hands at a stated interest, in buying corn, and taking care of it in public stores constructed for the purpose; this is sold by the Jurats, as an exclusive monopoly of the government, and the profits, over and above the five per cent. to individuals, carried to the public account; but, owing to their being, contrary to law, engaged in speculations of their own, and continued in office for an unlimited period, the most serious abuses have been occasioned in this branch of the public administration. The public complain loudly of the privilege to buy all the grain that comes to the island at their own price; observing that it is no longer of importance that a monopoly of this sort should exist, as there can be no apprehension entertained of those great scarcities which occurred when the Order governed and were at war with all the Mahometan states; which was the principal reason of the *Università's* formation.

There are, however, many arguments in favour

of the *Universitâ*: these are very ably detailed in Mr. Eaton's work, wherein he proves that a very considerable sum of money may be annually added to the revenues of Malta, by administering the concerns of the *Universitâ* as they might be; and the very alarming scarcity of this year proves, more than volumes, how important it is to have a large supply here, so as to prevent any rise in the price of wheat, which the lower classes would not probably be enabled to meet. The plan proposed by the above-named writer has never been put into execution; which was, of making a depôt of this island even for the English market. Had that been the case, the revenues of Malta would have been double what they are, from the immense profits which must have accrued from the sale of corn. Sicily and Gibraltar alone would have consumed large quantities at an advanced price during the last five years; whereas, by the narrow-minded policy of the *Universitâ*, all the corn imported here has been monopolized for home-consumption, an over-abundant stock never having been collected. To such a length, indeed, has the Jurati's parsimony been carried, that a few weeks ago, when the scarcity in Sicily was so unexampled as to affect our army there most seriously, it was not possible to obtain a grain of wheat from the *Universitâ* of this place, notwithstanding the pressing solicitations of our embassador there.

Il Monte de Pieta, founded in 1598, is one of the most important institutions in Malta, and of

universal utility. The object of this fund is that of pledging articles of every kind at the moderate interest of 2½ per cent. (for pawnbrokers are not tolerated,) which are suffered to remain unredeemed from one to three years. This establishment, like all the other public ones, became an object of indiscriminate plunder to the French; nor has it recovered since from the effects of that period; yet it is conducted with the utmost precision and regularity. The funds of this institution are furnished by individuals, who, like the *Universita* stock-holders, receive five per cent. interest for their money; the surplus is, or ought to be, devoted to charitable and pious purposes.

To conclude the subject of revenue. It would probably be going too far to assert, that those sums produced at present would be, if appropriated in a more scrupulous and economical manner, equal to the support of the island; yet I venture to say, that such arrangements may be resorted to, that the people of Malta will, most willingly, bear all the island's defence, upon which a large sum is now expended by the British government: the formation of an assembly, like that of Jamaica, would insure this point; and, at the same time, be flattering to the natives in the absence of a more extended degree of popular liberty.

In the Sanita, or Quarantine department, several alterations have lately taken place; although I fear none of those numerous abuses connected with its administration have been in any way corrected.

The former inspector of the health office being displaced, a gentleman from the medical staff of the army has been appointed: it is of the greatest importance, that, in a place so likely to be attacked with the plague, this officer should be obliged to remain constantly on his post; there are, however, many other reasons for his personal attendance; the salaries of his subalterns are so small that they are obliged to become traders; hence every species of partiality, and a great variety of practices which go to endanger the public safety. While on the subject of Quarantine, I cannot help shortly noticing that part of the internal police which relates to cleanliness: from the peculiar position of Valetta, having a gradual descent on each side towards the water, nothing would be more easy than to keep the streets constantly clean; yet with the exception of one or two of the principal ones, they are in general remarkably filthy, a circumstance which, in other parts of the Mediterranean, is known to have often been the cause of pestilence: it is more to be wondered at here, as the situation of inspector of the streets is one of considerable emolument. Much, however, cannot be said in praise of the person who occupies that place at present; his name is Satariano: during the governments of Sir A. Ball he was removed from an office of trust, and even underwent a regular process, which ended in disgrace and exile to Tripoly in the West; he was at the same time declared incapable of filling any

office whatever under government. How this gentleman has contrived to get into favour a second time is another point which I am by no means competent to answer, and can only add, that the duties of his place might be infinitely better discharged for the public good.

There are two post-offices in Malta, whereas one properly administered would answer the purpose of distributing letters much better than both these, and save an expensive establishment to the revenues of the island. The agent for packets, or in other words English post-master, is, by a highly improper arrangement, a merchant having very extensive concerns; the facility with which such a person, if so inclined, might considerably hurt the interests of his contemporaries, is very great; this is, happily, not the case at present, although the circumstance of his appointment is far from being agreeable to any of the trading people here. To the other numerous objections of the public to this place being in the charge of a mercantile man, it might be added that his own avocations prevent him from paying the least attention to sorting letters and forwarding them to individuals.

LETTER IV.

"Le plus importante maxime est de travailler avec beaucoup plus de soin à prevenir les besoins qu'à augmenter les revenus. Les gouvernements anciens faisant plus en effet, avec leur parcimonie, que les notres avec tous leur tresors."

ROUSSEAU.

National Character of the Maltese—Love of Liberty—Social Customs—Amusements—Maltese Ladies—Assassinations—Anecdotes—British and Maltese Intercourse—English Resident Manners—Opera-House, Theatres, &c.—Public Service of English Worship—Literature and Fine Arts—Pictures—Public Libraries—Biographical Sketches of the Natives—The Bishop, &c. &c.—Observations on Future Political Measures, Amelioration, &c. &c.

Malta, 1812.

IT is now time to dilate a little on the national character, manners, and customs of the Maltese. Upon these topics I shall not detain you very long as several other writers have treated the subject much more ably than I can possibly attempt to do. It seems a singular ordination of the Divinity, that wherever sterility prevails in any country, so the love of liberty increases amongst the inhabitants. This principle is probably derived

from the necessity of limiting their wants, and from the still more powerful incentive to independence, a slow progress towards luxury, that never-failing bane of civilized society; it requires, however, a very discriminating judge of human nature rightly to distinguish between a genuine feeling of virtuous freedom in a people, and that species of insolence and pride, which are the usual offspring of a defective system of government; both the above impulses operate very strongly on the natives of this island, so that when you hear a Maltese speak of liberty or treat his superior with a degree of *sang froid* bordering on contempt, you are at a loss whether to impute it to his natural love of being free, or to that relaxation in the laws, which enables him to insult you with impunity. Upon their mental qualifications little more can be said, than that a pure atmosphere and warm climate have given the Maltese in general a quickness of perception and ardency of passion not unlike that which characterize their Sicilian neighbours. A man's own country is not, however, always the place most favorable to the display of his talents; so that if you wish to know the capability of the Maltese, whether in the fine arts, or more abstruse sciences, it will be necessary for you to visit the continent, particularly Paris, Vienna, and Naples, where there are many distinguished Maltese who have risen to the head of their profession in various departments. But there are several men of talents still remaining in

the island. Nothing can exceed the avidity with which the natives of every description frequent social meetings: these are principally confined to their own relatives, mixed companies being rather discouraged; but a feast day, which are almost numberless throughout the year, is hailed by a Maltese as his principal source of happiness: on these occasions he sallies forth arrayed in his best cloaths, and with a segar in his mouth, which is only taken out for the purpose of chanting a verse relative to the charms of his brunette, or of some place of public resort; he hastens to the scene of rural festivity, and joining the dance forgets all the cares of this world. During the summer season, those who can afford to hire boats, pass whole days and nights on the water, and it is really gratifying sometimes to see all the members of a family regaling themselves in those excursions; for a greater degree of undisturbed domestic harmony is, I believe, no where more enjoyed than in Malta; but their sobriety, which was proverbial previous to our arrival, will not, I am inclined to think, bear quite so much scrutiny as heretofore. There are a great number of popular airs which you continually hear sung by boatmen and other labourers; the music, without possessing much scietific refinement, is remarkable for a considerable degree of primitive simplicity; the country dances of this island are also of a very peculiar style of composition, and extremely pretty.

Amongst the prejudices handed down from the

remotest antiquity, and most probably introduced by the Phœnicians, is the marked hatred entertained by the Maltese for persons with red hair; this is supposed to be derived from the Egyptians by some writers. The Chinese, according to Du Halde, have also a peculiar antipathy to red-haired people.

The impossibility of eradicating ancient manners is strongly exemplified in these people. Their language is a mixture of the Punic and Arabic, and the costume of the women bears a striking resemblance to that used on the shores of Barbary to this day, particularly amongst the lower class, who wear a kind of slipper and cowl over their head, which is exactly similar to the Tunisian custom. A great deal of that *mauvaise honte*, evinced by the Maltese ladies on our first arrival, has worn off, and although national pride will not allow them to relinquish the *faldetta*, they are by no means so inflexible as formerly, and our sympathetic countrymen are now more frequently blessed with the glances of those beautifully piercing black eyes, for which the Melitian fair are so distinguished: to this fascinating attribute may be added a shape that has captivated many an Englishman into matrimony.

Pugilism is unknown here, which is perhaps to be regretted, as its place is supplied by the use of a stiletto, the carrying of which is, I am truly sorry to say, still permitted. It has often been a high scene of amusement for John Bull to observe

two Maltese standing at a respectable distance, and abusing each other with the utmost vehemence, and then calmly retiring, for they never come to blows. Secret vengeance is, however, excited on those occasions, and the first favorable opportunity consigns one of the party, either to death or to the effects of a deep wound. Numbers of our countrymen have experienced that sort of sanguinary and atrocious revenge, which the law cannot too soon abolish.

The Maltese are a much more observant people than one would be induced to imagine from their apparent gravity in some respects; and there are no people more feelingly alive to every thing that passes, particularly of a political nature. Being one day in the civil court, a native came up, and pointing to the sovereign's arms, which are suspended at one end of it, asked very significantly whose portraits these were, hung upon each side: "that on the right is the head of our sovereign, the other is meant to represent your new governor, Lieutenant General Oakes." "Is it not very singular," he replied, "that both the frames should be ornamented with laurels, for now I cannot distinguish who is the King, or who the civil commissioner? be assured, Sir, there are few of my countrymen who have not long considered this exhibition as an unnecessary, if not improper, emblem of equality." Upon his Royal Highness the Prince Regent's birth-day, there was of course a feu-de-joie and discharge of artillery, but owing

to some circumstance or other, the cause of rejoicing was not publicly assigned, nor was there any fête given at the palace in the evening, as had been invariably done on the anniversary of another illustrious member of the Royal Family's birth day; this excited the greatest murmurs amongst the Maltese, who observed, that they did not see why they should not be permitted to participate in an event, which they hailed with as much heartfelt satisfaction as any of his Majesty's subjects.

It would be natural to imagine, that after our being so long in possession of this island, a greater disposition to mix with each other would have, ere this, manifested itself between the natives and English residents; such, however, is the wide difference of manners and habits, that there is a marked and mutual coldness observed to exist. It cannot be denied but that religion has a considerable influence in this respect: yet should the laws of Malta ever be assimilated to those of England, I have no doubt that a degree of confidence and amity will be thereby inspired, which is almost incompatible with the present state of the island.

The mode of living adopted here by the English residents, does not differ in the least from that of our other foreign possessions; and if that unreserved cordiality of sentiment, which serves to soften the unpleasantness of a long absence from one's native climate, does not always prevail be-

tween all ranks, an uncommon degree of sociability is promoted and cherished amongst the mercantile part of the community; in fact, they are characterized by that sort of liberality of sentiment and action, which must always raise the character of our country abroad, and reflect the highest credit on themselves: to say that there are not a few solitary instances of persons here, whose docility does not frequently savour of meanness, would be to surpass the bounds of truth and impartiality; but such people will, I fear, be always found in garrisons of this sort. The fêtes given at head quarters, are few in number, and invariably conducted with a most scrupulous regard to economy—a rare virtue, and one which does honor to the head of every government. We have occasionally been favored with the temporary sejour of some very distinguished personages; and amongst the rest, many ladies whose constitutions required the aid of a warm climate, and change of air to restore them. If I had intended these communications to have been the vehicles of fashionable anecdote, a wide field was open to me; but the weaknesses of one sex, or the follies of another, are such worn-out topics, and tend so little to general instruction in these days, that they should always give place to matters of greater importance.

The opera house, although not worth mentioning as a source of amusement, is open throughout the year, and devoted either to comedies, operas, or masquerades during the carnivals. The restric-

tions with respect to letting the boxes, choice of actors, and nightly riots which take place in this curious receptacle, render it a place of the utmost confusion in general.

The Roman motto of *Panem et Circenses*, as applied to the populace, has never been neglected so much as by the English government: it is an important subject which no legislator or minister of a country should overlook. Here there has been an extraordinary paucity of amusement calculated to remind the English residents of their own country, or to fascinate the Maltese. A Mr. Stevens of the admiralty court, animated by that laudable zeal which few of our emigrants possess, was determined to give a new turn to the pastimes of this place, and accordingly fitted up a very neat private theatre at his own expense, for which he has since been remunerated by a subscription of the merchants; but he has the merit of setting a very great source of amusement on foot, and it is now likely to do uncommonly well. Being the first English theatre opened on this island, it will not, I hope, be unacceptable if I send you a copy of the occasional prologue, composed by a Mr. H. Fletcher* of this place, and spoken with considerable applause by Captain Clark of the royal marine corps, an amateur of distinction; in

* This gentleman's literary talents have often been successfully displayed, since his arrival in Malta; and with a very happy turn for poetical composition, he is said to be the best letter writer in the island.

delivering the following lines, he appeared in the character of a distressed poet.

Was ever man in such a dismal plight
As *Peter Dactyl* on a public night!
As Poet Laureat to this house I'm hired,
And from these brains a Prologue is required.
That's not the worst, but I must speak it too,
And make on Malta's boards this bold debût.
How changed the scene since I, a critic then,
Perched near the roof of classic Drury Lane,
My shilling paid among the gods to soar,
Dispensed applause, and joined the loud *encore!*
Then, as I swigged refreshing draughts of beer,
My soul fermented the critique severe,
Plays, as the porter worked, were saved or lost,
By me dissected in the Morning Post;
To true theatric taste I formed the town,
And quizzed both houses—till they both burn'd down.
'Tis now my turn the public eye to meet,
A hopeful sprig, transplanted from Grub Street.
That youth alone my feelings now can tell,
Who bidding to the desk a long farewel,
In spite of friends, has rushed upon the stage,
A desperate Lear, at eighteen years of age!
His royal soul a vulgar life disdains,
But pants for battle on these *wooden plains*,
Anxious, without the risk of life, *to die*,
And rend, with fearful groans, *the canvas sky*.
King Richard now, behind a pasteboard shield,
He bears the fight's hot brunt on Bosworth Field,
Hunts Richmond out, resolved to lose or win,
A crown—of *brass*, and sceptre—of *block tin!*
Next night, how changed, he quaffs at Juliet's tomb,
A swift Lethean draught,—composed of *rum!*
Now, Sir John Falstaff, feels his stomach full,
Poor hungry devil,—not of beef,—but *wool*.

But to my task, I'm hither sent to plead,
The cause of those who your indulgence need,
Selected doubtless for my rhyming parts,
To steal this march upon your gentle hearts.
In search of mirth and rational delight,
A social few within these walls unite,
Resolved to try their efforts on the stage,
The school of man, in every clime and age.
Malta no longer wants the comic scene,
To rouse the mind, and drive away the spleen,
A *British* theatre adorns her isle,
Where *English* wit shall *English* hearts beguile;
Hearts that no more shall miss the happy hours,
When nature felt and own'd its magic powers.
Fostered by you, the British muse shall rise
To her true pitch, beneath these distant skies,
Nor space nor time her influence control,
Truth is her wand, her region is the soul!
As each, in her support, will do his best
To fill his part, we solemnly protest
Against the critic, and from his decrees,
Appeal to judges whom we hope to please.
Laugh where we must, be candid where we can,
Long since exclaimed the essayist on man:
"Laugh when you can," is our advice to you,
And our entreaty is, be candid too;
On my account pray patronize the plan,
For I'm, (you see), an interested man,
My salary here, as laureat, quite depends
On the productions *of these finger ends;*
And apropos, I think th' occasion fit,
Slightly to glance at my own benefit:
Should that take place, permit me to solicit
A repetition of the present visit!

Those amongst the natives, who disapproved of the Jesuits' college being converted into a mercantile house, must have felt still more irritation on

the establishment of the private theatre there, which is actually the case; but in this the original promoter of the plan is far from being to blame, as he gave those in power here, an ample opportunity of manifesting their inclination to contribute to the rational amusement of the public, by allotting a small house for the purpose; but as this was altogether unattended to, Mr. Stevens was offered a room in the college, from that part of it, however, which had previously been appropriated to the merchants. A ludicrous parody on Gray's celebrated elegy has been some time in circulation here, and although the author has not as yet been discovered, a friend has given me a copy, which, from its merit, and conveying such an exact picture of the commercial rooms, may afford you some amusement.*

There is one point connected with the manners of our countrymen here, which cannot fail to attract the notice of every traveller who visits the island; that is the mode in which religious concerns are managed. Divine service is performed in a room dedicated to that purpose, in a corner of the civil commissioner's house. The clergymen who officiate are limited to two, one of them, Mr. Laing, occupies the place of public secretary to the island, and private secretary to the civil commissioner; the other a Mr. Millar, the garrison chaplain, has long been interpreter to the vice-

* Vide Appendix.

admiralty court. It may be readily imagined, that the appointment of clerical characters to political situations, which require that they should enter into all the intrigues of modern politics, is highly improper, to say no worse of it. With every respect for the public secretary here, I cannot but observe, that his sacred profession of a minister of the gospel, should never have been converted into a line which must every instant remind him that he is not "preaching peace and good will towards his fellow-creatures." And as to the Rev. Mr. Millar, who has for some years derived a considerable emolument from his situation in the vice-admiralty court, it may with justice be added, that his salary as chaplain to the forces rendered a search after future gain unnecessary, particularly that which was to be procured by a servile attendance on a law court. I trust that enough has been said on this subject to awaken the attention of those in whose power it is to remedy the evil: there is probably no nation on earth where the subject of religion is so violently agitated as in England; it would be well, therefore, to avoid the imputation of paganism abroad, which epithet has been more than once bestowed upon us in this part of the world.

Literature and the fine arts, as you may readily imagine, are not very flourishing here; in fact, where there is no other press except that of the government, how can it be otherwise with the former? the success of the latter depends on proper

culture and due encouragement, both of which are wanting in Malta; and the few remains of ancient monuments are insufficient to rouse the dormant emulation of the inhabitants: in the Jesuits college where design is professed to be taught, there are neither models nor originals of a nature to insure the successful study of drawing. Of the specimens, whether in sculpture or painting, found at Valetta, there are none particularly worth mentioning. In the palace or house of government there were several good pictures; a few indifferently good ones remain, they are of course public property. In one of the great halls, now converted into a suite of servants' rooms, there are two very fine bas-reliefs affixed to the wall: one is a beautiful head of Zenobia, and the other of Mars. The armoury placed at the northern side of this building is also an object of curiosity to strangers: the little statue of Hercules, said to have been found in the ruins of a famous temple near Marsa Scirocco, is uncommonly beautiful; it is deposited in the national library. There is also a very fine bronze of a Neptune of Gio de Bologna; this, raised on a curious pedestal, surrounded by a sort of fountain, is to be seen in the centre of the fish market.

There are two public libraries in Valetta; the principal of these formerly belonged to the knights, and in consequence of all their private ones falling into this at the proprietors' deaths, there are now above 40,000 volumes in it, chiefly

classical, French, and Italian works. The books have been recently deposited in the Conservatoria, originally designed for their reception; but a number of reasons will for some time prevent any great acquisition of British literature, unless the revenues of the island are found equal to the allotment of a small sum for their purchase; at present the subscriptions are barely sufficient to defray the expenses of keeping the rooms in order, and paying a few messengers.* The other library belongs to the garrison, that is to say, has been collected by the military and naval officers stationed here since we came to the island; independent of this library being very small, the partial manner of conducting it, and highly illiberal exclusion of the mercantile body, must always render it of circumscribed utility and comparatively trifling importance.

Biography has ever been considered as no less a source of useful morality than of gratifying amusement; but as there is no general rule without an exception, so any attempt on my part to enter into a delineation of public characters here, could not be expected either to instruct or amuse you. Yet to complete this sketch of manners, it may be proper to say a few words of those amongst the natives whose characters are entirely unknown in

* The Abbate Navarro, a man of great piety, learning, and virtue, for many years librarian to the order, still continues to fill that office.

England; and if not slightly described to you now, might perhaps be for ever unknown to the British public. Considering the barrenness of my materials, I shall not, however, trouble you at length, or touch on any person who has not a considerable influence on the interests of the community.

The Bishop, a M. Mattei, and native of the island, is chiefly indebted for his elevation to the episcopal chair to the patronage of the King of Sicily. To the honour of this divine it ought to be observed, that he has never been induced so far to forget the precepts of his Divine Model, as to interfere in political subjects of any description; and if his benevolence is not so unbounded as his predecessor, the universally regretted Labini, he has the felicity of being esteemed as a man of considerable probity. Here it ought to be observed, that the revenues of the Bishop of Malta are of such a nature, that, with a disposition to be charitable, he may do an infinity of good; and he is even expected by the Maltese to exercise that first of Christian virtues with an unsparing and beneficent hand.

Having already alluded to the director of the Jesuits' College, I should not again have introduced the name of Mr. S. Caruana, but that the great importance of his situation requires that his former history should be more generally known to those of the Maltese, who may be disposed to place their children in the seminary of which he is

the superior. Far from being popular among the natives, this gentleman is said to be possessed of an ambition not altogether commensurate with his talents.

During the time of the French domination here, he served as one of the members of the commission of government, but in a short time fled to the country, in consequence of a misunderstanding with the director, Renaud de St. Angelo. Much, both of good and evil, has been done by disappointed ambition or wounded pride. Mr. Caruana, actuated, I should hope, by very different and more praise-worthy motives, was soon seen at the head of the patriots, inspiring them by his eloquence, and stimulating them by his example to vanquish the common enemy: this great object accomplished, he naturally looked for his political reward, and found it in the place he now enjoys; although without possessing a single degree in any university. Neither his claims on the British government, nor favour amongst the people, are said to have justified this priest's endeavours to supplant the present bishop. When his nomination was about to take place, his patron, Sir A. Ball, wisely considered that quite enough, and perhaps too much, had been done for him, in placing this Mr. Caruana at the head of the national studies. To conclude this subject, I have only to add, that amongst the clergy of the island there are few more unpopular characters than the above-named divine.

Mr. Borg. Olivieri, president of the Grand Court, is a man of very considerable talents—would they had hitherto been devoted to the removal of that perplexing ambiguity of the Maltese laws, so universally reprobated and severely felt, instead of adding to it, and patiently witnessing so many perversions of equity as have been known to exist during late years! The subject of this short memoir has held his situation for some time, and realized a good deal of property: there is no legal character in the island better acquainted with the glorious intricacies of the Lombard and Roman codes, nor any person who is more ready to descant on their respective merits; in fact, I have known many persons call on the President Olivieri, for the purpose of obtaining his opinion upon some knotty point, each of whom has been so charmed, in a short time, by a long dissertation upon the *lex scripta*, that, overwhelmed at length with the learned gentleman's eloquence, he has taken his hat and retired, having totally forgotten the object of his visit.

The president's jurisdiction in this island is almost unlimited, being, in every sense of the word, chief magistrate; how much, therefore, must the public happiness and tranquillity depend upon the virtue and talents of the person who fills this highly important situation? From the alleged defects in the laws, and general influence of long-established abuses here, it is probable that no one occupying a place of public trust can be in favour

with the people. This may account, in some measure, for the marked unpopularity of Mr. Olivieri, who, notwithstanding the public opinion, may yet be entitled to every praise, both in his private life and official capacity.

It is a most extraordinary and lamentable truth in the modern art of government, that in choosing persons to fill places of the first responsibility in a country, more regard is generally had to a talent for business, which may be easily acquired by the most ordinary capacity, than to those qualities of the heart, that make not only the persons, but the measures of an administration approved by the public. Applying this observation more immediately to our foreign possessions, nothing has appeared to me so extremely impolitic, or more productive of mischief, than the selection of particular persons, and their continuance in office for an unlimited period, to the exclusion of others, equally, if not better, calculated to fill the same places; and, above all, taught, by the nature of the constitution, to look up for a participation in the honours and emoluments of their own country.

The above train of reflection has been forced upon me by the actual state of things here, and by that marked indifference to the public opinion, which seems to allow some persons to occupy situations, in discharging the duties of which, universal disapprobation has been excited among all classes of his Majesty's subjects. If the heads of a government knew how many real benefits are lost to a

country from the blind toleration of such people, they would no doubt, in consulting their own interests, gladly yield to the general wish, and eminently serve the community. Convinced that, when the happiness of a hundred thousand individuals is deeply involved in the conduct of one man, every feeling of delicacy should give way to a love of truth, and to the character of one's own country, which becomes identified, in some measure, with the measures of her servants, however remote or insignificant, I cannot, on the present occasion refrain, in closing this short specimen of Maltese biography, from attempting to draw the portrait of one of the most unpopular characters in the island, and who is universally disliked by his own countrymen. As the ministry in England have nothing whatever to do with the appointment of this personage, it is quite unnecessary to mention his name. Those in whose power it is to turn the following picture to the public advantage, will have no difficulty in recognizing the original. The person to whom I allude is a native of this island, where he was bred to the law; and, owing to those talents which but too often supply the place of virtue in the legal characters of these countries, was advanced, on the arrival of the French, to the situation of a judge. Patronized by the late civil commissioner, he was in 1803 appointed to an office which gave him a most powerful influence in every department of the civil and political administration of Malta:

this was still further increased soon after by his nomination to another confidential post; the holding of which seemed to every one, as experience has proved it to be, totally incompatible with the welfare of his fellow-citizens. Adverting to his natural and acquired peculiarities of character, this gentleman possesses a singular species of *suaviter in modo;* or, as a celebrated writer more happily expresses it, "the characteristic prudence, indefatigable smile, and persevering assiduity," which, while they impose successfully on his superiors, cannot deceive those who are more minutely acquainted with his "principles of acting." If political or private virtue is to be estimated according to the good or bad opinion entertained of us by the public, then, indeed, has the subject of this memoir fallen to a very low state of degradation; nor have I ever heard one solitary panegyric pronounced in his praise: on the contrary, rumours, and those of a well-founded description, have incessantly been afloat, relative to his ingenious mode of evading an exposure which might bring him before the bar of public justice, and blast his future hopes. Much more might be said, but as my object is not "to collect the scattered sweets, till their united virtue tortures the sense," I shall conclude by humbly observing, that the total amount of this gentleman's salary, from 1803 till the present time, has not exceeded 49,000 scudi of Malta, whereas it can at any moment be unanswerably proved, that

he has laid out no less than 104,000 upon houses and gardens.

On reading the foregoing, I feel satisfied that the Maltese public, whether natives or English residents, will acquit me of having over-drawn my picture; they will at the same time, it is hoped, candidly discriminate between that exposure of vice dictated by personal animosity, and those more laudable feelings of honest indignation, which prompt a man to uphold the character of his own government, and render his fellow-creatures an important benefit, by removing, if possible, the cause of their unhappiness.

It was my original intention to extend this part of my letters on the state of Malta to some of our own countrymen, of which there are many here, both in public and private life, whose history, if it did not convey much moral instruction to the reader, would at least excite a little amusement. The task, however, though an agreeable one, I willingly leave to those whose time and inclinations fit them more peculiarly to that department of literary illustration.

Recurring to the civil and political relations of Malta, it is, I presume, quite unnecessary to say any thing more, as calculated to convince you, and to impress upon the minds of his Majesty's ministers the importance, and even absolute necessity, of giving to the inhabitants that which they have ardently been praying for during a period of thirteen years—"a constitution uniting the spirit

of our old free and *legitimate* one with that of *Great Britain.*" If there was any thing in this most rational demand, that militated against the interests of my sovereign, or warred with the rights of humanity and immutable justice, I should be the first to condemn it; if it was impracticable, I would be equally ready to convince the Maltese, for whose future happiness I am deeply interested, that they asked too much; but I feel perfectly satisfied in my own mind, that, in soliciting his Britannic Majesty to make them participators in those enviable blessings which the British constitution guarantees to the meanest of his subjects, the most flattering compliment is conveyed, while it evinces an unequivocal attachment, and a sincere desire of adding to the strength of the empire.

The incalculable value of Malta is now well understood: where, I should like to know, is that politician or statesman, that would sanction the remotest idea of its restitution in the event of a general peace to-morrow?—Has it not been acquired by the most legitimate rights of sovereignty—the people's choice? And is there any nation of Europe to which it is half so essential as to Great Britain? Our continuance in Sicily is, I regret to say, most precarious, most problematical: the Balearic islands are held in trust; Sardinia cannot be relied on, nor has it any naval station that would answer our purpose; let us then for ever banish the thought of abandoning Malta, upon the possession of which our power in the

Mediterranean is vitally dependent; but in keeping it, let us conciliate the inhabitants, not by a slavish or servile indulgence of their prejudices, but a due regard to their religious tenets, to the establishment of equitable laws, and their faithful execution: by this we shall demonstrate a proud example of our liberality, that will resound through the whole continent of Europe; and in the language of their petition to the throne, "gratify the hearts of a loyal and devoted people."

It is scarcely in the power of any person to form an idea of what we have lost in this part of the world, by that tardiness of political measures, which should never characterize a great nation: and I venture to add, that, by a different line of policy in the Mediterranean during the last ten years, a *power might have been* created, that would have well nigh hurled the continental tyrant from his throne. It has been the misfortune of England, and still more of those intrusted with war and diplomacy inside the straits of Gibraltar, that they were either ignorant or insensible of the amazing and inexhaustible resources that surrounded them on every side: but it is, I fear, too late to deplore that which is almost irretrievable: and what the poet says of individuals in this case, may with equal truth be applied to nations:

> There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows, and in miseries:

On such a full sea are we now afloat;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.

Thus it has unhappily been with us, and as a continuation of the subject can only tend to awaken sensations, neither calculated to mitigate the past or improve the future, I shall resume the first topic, merely to add, that in framing a code of laws for this island, professing to have any analogy to the English constitution, the propriety of separating the civil and military commands, will not be overlooked—this is mentioned, in consequence of some difference of opinion that exists upon a point, which is, in my humble opinion, so self evident, as not to admit of a doubt. If the experience of the last three years, has not most amply proved the incompatibility of uniting these important authorities, then, indeed, I shall have no hesitation in changing my opinion; but I would ask the advocates in favour of this measure, whether it is likely that any one brought up to the habits of a soldier, and whose education took place in the camp or on a parade, can be the properest person to guard over the civil liberties of the community?—Is an officer in the army, however exalted his rank, or blessed with professional talents, and a disposition to do good, likely to be conversant in the multifarious intricacies of finance, innumerable difficulties of commercial questions, and still more complicated labyrinths of Italian jurisprudence? Finally, in maintaining that degree

of order and discipline, necessary amongst a garrison composed of four or five thousand men of different nations, and providing for its security against foreign and domestic foes, is not the time of an able general amply and most usefully occupied? These simple questions being answered, I would then refer you to the documents, which I herewith send you; on the perusal of which, you may form whatever judgment you may think proper, but I have no doubt, perfectly consonant with my own.* These observations might be extended to noticing the impolicy and great public inconvenience of conferring a number of places on the same person —here this has been strongly exemplified for several years. An officer of artillery has been known to fill above six situations, each of which required personal attendance. I have already alluded to the singular circumstance of a clergyman of the church of England occupying a post which is synonimous to that of secretary of state in England, and still continuing to perform the functions of his holy office!—these and a thousand other considerations, not less important, will naturally occupy the attention of those who are destined to be the future legislators of this island.

Prompted by my anxiety to do justice to the people of Malta, and at the same time impartially to support the interests of the British nation, I have in the foregoing communications adopted that

* Vide Appendix in general.

freedom of expression, which the importance of the subjects appeared to dictate, without, I trust, overstepping the bound prescribed by decorum and the laws—uninfluenced by the spirit of party or prejudice, I look for my reward, in the wisdom and success of those measures, which may be taken for their future welfare and prosperity.

CONCLUSION.

In consequence of the unforeseen delays which have attended the publication of my letters, blended with an anxiety of elucidating, in every possible way, the subjects to which they relate, I have deemed it due, not only to his Majesty's government, but to the public at large, to subjoin an abridged detail of those events which have occurred in the Mediterranean since my departure from Sicily, in March, 1812, just as the new ministry of his Sicilian Majesty had been nominated.

Having nothing very material to add from myself, the few following pages will principally consist of extracts from private letters, upon the veracity of which may be placed the utmost reliance, and some passages that have, from time to time, appeared in the public papers at home: these accord so perfectly with confidential communications addressed to myself, that their insertion will answer every purpose of informing

the country how things really stand abroad, and save me the trouble of intruding any more of my less important comments on public notice.

Having stated in the clearest manner I could, the state of affairs in the Sicilian capital, up to the 31st of March, it is unnecessary to say any thing more about them here, except that of calling the reader's recollection to the subject, and then requesting his attention to the following extract of a letter, received from a person of talents and respectability at Palermo, soon after my arrival at Malta, to which island I proceeded in order to embark for England; it is dated April the 5th, 1812.

"———You will not, I presume, be surprized at the voyage of a great personage, his aptitudes we know are of the courier cast, and with righteous Job he may safely say '—my days are swifter than a post.'—Thank heaven, we have at length, after a scene of the most complicated villainy on the one side, and forbearance on the other, got rid, in part, of the enemies of England and Sicily. Circello, Castellintini, Tomasi, and their infernal coadjutors have withdrawn from office, never, I trust, to return; you are too well acquainted with the actions of these men, and those means by which they have brought this island, and even their sovereign, to the brink of ruin, to require any further comment of mine. Be it sufficient to add, that the new ministers have begun their functions, but public sentiment is not altered; popularity

with the Sicilians is truly ephemeral, for they expect every thing to be done in a day, and already begin to think the change is not for the better. The scarcity and dearness of bread, and of every article of living, almost to positive famine, give the *ci-devant* administration a favourable appeal to the fanaticism if not ratiocination of the people; and present ills, though the result of previous malversation, are attributed to the immediate agency of present authority, by the unreflecting mass of the community; whilst the *ci-devants* know how to profit by contingencies, and, perhaps, admit the adage, that 'one good turn deserves another.' However, I have no doubt but that every possible art is used by our adversaries to provoke the people into an aversion from their allies, and am truly sorry to believe, that success attends the exertions made use of for the end desired."

When these sentiments are compared with the events just announced to the nation, it would appear that the writer was endowed with the gift of prophecy.

Leaving Malta I arrived in this country about the middle of July, and shortly after received a variety of letters, which all concurred in representing the state of Sicily, if possible more deplorable than ever; amongst the various acts of mismanagement and peculation, which occurred between the period of nominating the new ministry and retirement of the old, the latter

gave a loose to those predilections of gratifying their own wishes and those of the court in every wish, without once bestowing a thought upon their public duty, or the interests of the people.

No sooner had Villarmosa entered into the financial department, than he discovered that there was a deficit of 18,000 ounces; which sum had been drawn from the bank a few days before, by the authority of a distinguished personage, who had some time before given his power up to other hands. In fact, every thing, calculated to irritate the Sicilians and ourselves, was perpetrated, nor did the old spirit of intrigue, calumny, and falsehood experience the least diminution from the recent change, upon which all classes had been taught to look with such unequivocal hopes of success.

It was at length resolved, after long and painful deliberations, that a parliament should be assembled.—This body being summoned according to the forms of the constitution, did not meet, for the dispatch of business, till the 20th of July; when the following resolutions were passed, and are given as they appeared to the public in September.

Palermo, July 24.

"The Parliament held their second sitting (first for dispatch of business) on the 20th, when the following fourteen articles were resolved, and passed through the three Chambers, by a large majority, in spite of the influence of the *Court.* There is not, perhaps, in history so remarkable a

revolution brought about, with so much tranquillity. The Barons have given up their feudal rights, *and if the Resolutions are followed up*, of which I have no doubt, the people will be *free*.

"Our minister deserves the highest credit for his conduct; the Sicilians admit that they owe every thing to his moderation, good sense, and firmness.

"1st. The supreme authority of making laws and imposing taxes is vested alone in the nation.

"2nd. The executive power is in the king.

"3d. Judicial authority is in the magistrates, subject to the approval of parliament.

"4th. The King's person is sacred.

"5th. *The ministers are responsible to parliament.*

"6th. The two chambers to consist of lords and commons, and the clergy to have seats in the former.

"7th. *The barons to have only one vote each.*

"8th. The right of assembling parliament is in the King, *and necessary every year.*

"9th. The nation sole proprietor of the state.

"10th. No Sicilian can be judged or condemned, except by laws to be recognized by parliament.

"11th. *The feudal law is abolished, as well as the right of investiture (monopoly).*

"12th. *The privileges of the Barons over their vassals, are also abolished.*

"13th. *Every proposition relative to taxation, must originate in the lower chamber, and be approved by the upper.*

"14. A modification of the British constitution to be recommended this session.

"The parliament had their second meeting last night, the 24th. The ecclesiastical chamber sent a deputation to the lords, stating, as their opinion, that the first article of the resolution should go to establish the religion of the country, which was carried, after a debate. It was then resolved, that the articles already voted by the three chambers should be forthwith presented to the King for his sanction, previous to any further proceedings, it being argued, that if the King should put his *Veto* on these resolutions (which were to form the basis of the new constitution) any superstructure formed upon them must fall to the ground. There were only six dissentient voices on this question. Princes Trabia, Cassero, *(the present minister of the interior,)* Cuto, Luchese, and Niscemi, and two others, voted with the court. Butera, the premier baron, gave the first voice for the articles being immediately presented. Their deliberations continued to a late hour.

"The Marquis Salvo proposed and carried the 9th resolution against the ministers.

"Prince Belmonte made a most eloquent speech, and to his perseverance, ability, and firmness, every credit is due.

"The Marquis Salvo also proposed the trial by

jury, which was opposed by the lords, but carried in the commons.

"The Duke of Sperlenca proposed and carried the motion relative to the feudal law, on which occasion he delivered a brilliant speech.

"I have little more to add, than that the parliament is declared permanent until the constitution is formed."

Although there is ample room for comment on these articles, yet they breathe a spirit of such freedom, when compared to what one might expect from men who have been born and educated under despotism, that it would be a pity to censure an apparent desire to begin upon so very liberal a scale. Exulting most warmly in the new era of public happiness, which had thus opened out to the unfortunate people, and anticipating the most beneficial results from the labours of men, the majority of whom seemed to vie with each other, in retrieving the lost character of human nature, I had already figured to myself a return of those halcyon days which Sicily had seen in the reign of Hiero and Timoleon; but what was my surprize on receiving a variety of communications, in which the main points contained in the following extract of a letter from Palermo, published in our papers, were amply confirmed.

Palermo, Aug. 26, 1812.

"I suppose you in England will be much elevated at the news of the British constitution being

established in Sicily; but that you may not be deceived by this piece of mummery, I shall endeavour, as briefly as possible, to explain the whole fallacy to you. No doubt the resolutions voted by the parliament will have been made public, but lest you should not have seen them, I herewith inclose you a copy.

"The first object that will strike you in these resolutions, is the true revolutionary spirit which they breathe throughout: not one word of any of the fundamental maxims of the state, nor of the laws which have hitherto existed; congenial to French reform, they tend to pull down every established law and custom, while they reserve for a future period the regulations they propose to substitute. You will perceive by the tenth article, that the whole judicial and penal laws are virtually abolished, while a new code is promised, on which every thing in future is to depend. Here, then, in one moment is overturned the whole fabric of an ancient government, which has existed nearly ten centuries without opening one of its records, nor examining the foundation on which it rested, and with the same precipitation it is voted that the British constitution is to be adopted.

"You are no doubt sensible, that to adopt any system of government it is necessary that the changes made should be introduced by degrees, and that the effect of one new ordination should be well ascertained before it be followed up by another; also that the operation of these laws and

regulations should produce the same effect on the society to be reformed as was observed to result in the state we took for our model. To copy a law verbatim, and to apply it to a people in totally different circumstances, is to counteract and spoil the very effect we intended. In order to elucidate this proposition I must endeavour to shew, from the resolutions of parliament, that instead of the British constitution, the government of Sicily, as it now stands on paper, is purely republican, and that the king is as completely dethroned as Louis XVI. was by the constitution of 1792.

"By the first article the legislative power is declared to belong exclusively to parliament, and the executive to the king.

"By the ninth article, the nation, as they style themselves (a very revolutionary phrase in the manner it is there applied), begin by depriving the crown of all its landed property and revenues, which they say belong to the nation, and then give to the crown a provision for an annuity on their own word. This is not all; for after having declared the executive power to belong exclusively to the king, the parliament assume the administration of the revenues, and declare that they will pay them into the hands of the minister of finance, to be employed according to their will and pleasure. Thus virtually all power is centred in the two houses, legislative, executive, and administrative; the king is a pensioned pageant without functions, or influence, or patronage.

"The depriving the crown of its demesnes is a dangerous violation of property, for if it be examined by what title these lands were held, it will be found that at the Norman conquest Roger de Hauteville assigned them to the crown, as he did the fiefs held by the nobility to the present day. If, therefore, the nation consider themselves as having a right to take them from the crown, the same right of resuming the lands of the nobility holds good; and why should not the nobility thus be turned out of their estates?

"It will most probably be considered by the generality of the people in England, that the nobility, in destroying all feudality in the tenures of their lands, have most virtuously sacrificed their privileges to the public good; we, who know the Sicilians, are, however, not to be duped by such artifices. It must be remembered, that the only title these hold their lands by, is the obligation of military service, afterwards commuted into a tribute, independent of the other tributes they were also bound to pay, as appears from the 420 *capitolo* promulgated by king Alphonsus, of Arragon, at the petition of the parliament:—'Item supplica lo dicto Regno, che nulla citta, terra, sive loco, oi Burhni, sive prelato sia exempto delo pagamento dela presenti collecta e donativo.'

"The nobles of Sicily, by thus sanctioning the plunder of the crown lands, and emancipating themselves from the obligation of military service, have no other end in view than to exempt them-

selves from the commutation which they would otherwise be obliged to submit to on that separate account; by agreeing to the plunder of the crown lands, they are not aware that they tacitly admit the principle, that as they hold of the crown, they may also in their turn be obliged to restore their own estates to the nation, which may, on the very same plea, resume them.

"Thus the glorious revolution of Sicily, has already overturned the civil and criminal code of the country before they re-established a new one; it has established a precedent destructive of the security of landed property; it has wrested from the crown the right of administering the resources of the state, and has put it into the hands of the commons; it has set afloat every established principle, and it has the impudence to call itself the British constitution.

"When it is remembered that this close imitation of revolutionary French legislation is produced by a British nobleman, commanding a British army, one is naturally filled with astonishment and indignation, and as it is impossible to conceive it to be the result of a wicked or mischievous mind, but from the best intentions, which every one here will do him the justice to allow, it follows, of course, that Lord William Bentinck, in allowing such resolutions to be formed, so subversive of all order and good government, has proved himself extremely unacquainted with two material points, viz. the Sicilian government, which he has

overturned with a view of reforming; and the British constitution, which he thinks he has been establishing; for how can it be said that the English constitution is established where the patronages of the state belong to any body but the king?

"In England, you know, the commons propose all money bills, but in England these possess immense riches, as well as extensive knowledge and refined education. What are the commons of Sicily? A body of men for the most part both poor and ignorant; among them the most energetic are a few, who a little while since were distinguished by the true revolutionary French principles. These are the men who are to frame taxes; those who have nothing are to tax those who have every thing; and those who have every thing are to throw out these bills, and throw them back again on the labouring poor, who have nothing. In the mean time the old taxes on bread and other commutables are abolished, and no new system of revenue resolved on, and the consequence must be, that in a few months the revenue of the country will totally fail, and the treasury of Whitehall must be drawn on to supply the deficiency.

"An abuse had crept in for many years past, quite contrary to the laws of Sicily: it consisted of a right usurped by the nobles on their estates, to prevent the free sale of the produce of the soil, either with a view of selling their own produce

exclusively, or of extorting money by the sale of the monopoly of the same to individuals on their own domain.—These rights they have refused to give up unless they are bought of them at twenty years purchase by the nation, and charged on the townships. These abusive rights are called *dritti angarici*, oppressive rights are expressly prohibited by the 38th *Capitolo* of the kingdom, passed in the reign of Frederic III. This usurpation they have refused to abandon without an equivalent, although they can only pretend to it as a feudal right. Thus they declare the abolition of these rights, which is to exempt themselves from the conditions of their tenure, and yet pretend to hold them when it is to oppress the people. These are the lamentable effects of overturning governments without knowing what they really are, and renouncing the authority of laws, which, from their antiquity, the nobles themselves must respect.

"This, you see, is the picture of the English constitution, as established in Sicily; that is, the monarchy is overturned, and the power wholly engrossed by Prince Ventimiglia and his creatures, who have had the ability to make Lord William subservient to their views; the thing is so palpable at Palermo, that the former, among his nearest confidents, laughs most heartily at him, and holds him very cheap.

"This, my friend, is the deplorable state of this country; all men of discernment in silence,

lament the prospect; they see an oligarchy carrying every thing according to their caprice, under the specious title of a British government; they have assumed all power, which they must of course use as they think fit, because they have declared the old laws null, while they have established no new ones on which to regulate their conduct, and every thing must go into confusion. The intention of an amelioration of the affairs of Sicily is now entirely defeated; for the consequence of all this absurdity on one side, and dupery on the other, has already made men who see the danger of such violent measures, regret the old order of things, and you may rest assured, that the court party will, from henceforward, gain strength every day.*

"Before I close this long letter, I must point out to you another consequence of these measures. As the oligarchy at Palermo have assumed all power, the Messinese, who were, from the first, attached to the British, which the Palermitans have never been, find they have only changed masters; their disappointment is already beginning to discover itself, and their esteem of us is daily decreasing. When you consider the vicinity of Messina to the Italian shore, and the opportunities that a disaffected city so situated must command to correspond with the enemy, the danger of such a disposition, in a place of

* How singularly prophetical!

such consequence to our interest and our safety, must be obvious to you. I think you will not blame me for expressing my anxiety, that government in England will not be too supine on a matter of such importance.

"Two motives only can be assigned for the interference of the British in the internal government of this kingdom; *the one from a principle of justice, to alleviate the miseries of the people;* the other, that we might have a greater influence than we had during the old regime. You see by the decision of the peers, in the case of the *dritti angarici*, as above, that the people are just as ill off as ever; and as for our influence, that must inevitably diminish.—Lord William, had he had the free use of his faculties, might have seen that it is much easier to govern a country through a minister, than by the means of an assembly which he can never manage, and which is already beginning to give him cause to repent of his rashness and presumption, in pretending to legislate for a people of whose history, customs, laws, and even language, he was totally ignorant."

The solemn pledge with which the first resolutions close, considerably diminished my fears as to those apprehensions so justly entertained by the above intelligent writer, and patience was almost exhausted in waiting the arrival of some further accounts relative to the progress of public liberty in Sicily; but, except the underwritten passage extracted from a similar source to the former

nothing appeared.* No more was heard either of the Royal family, the parliament, or the people for several months: and those who, like myself, were interested for the success of our measures in the island, began to imagine that the work of reform was real, not imaginary. Their hopes were however of short duration, the emissaries of a certain party never ceased to stir up the people against us and our friends; inadequate punishment, the want of making a proper example, and above all our interference in the executive government of an *allied country*, afforded an uncontrovertible argument in the hands of our enemies; and while troops were leaving Sicily to fight the battles of Spain, the parliament was thought no more of, and we vainly supposed that to promulgate laws without putting them into execution, would answer every purpose of benevolence and security.

Minutely to detail the subsequent events in Sicily, till the affairs in February, and March last, when through the unabated enmity and machination of the same party, our army and the people of Sicily were once more marked out for slaughter,

* "The affairs of Sicily are said to continue in an unsettled condition. Letters from Messina of the 22nd of October state, that the Hereditary Prince of Sicily was so extremely ill, that all hopes of his recovery were doubtful; that the physicians had given it as their opinion that he had been poisoned, and the author of his illness was of course to be found in one near his person, IF NOT ALLIED IN BLOOD!"

is neither exactly in my power, nor would it bring any thing to light except a repetition of those scenes already described in the latter part of the first volume. The whole of our bitterest enemies being suffered to remain in the island, particularly all those who had been so deeply concerned in the guillotine plot, what could be expected from such an iniquitous and malevolent combination, and how is it possible for Sicily to prosper while such people as Pasquâlina, Troïsi, Cupani, &c.; are suffered to remain there unpunished?

The singular facts just announced relative to new plots still more sanguinary than the former, in which the most distinguished characters in the island will be found to have performed the principal parts, are I trust of such a nature, that no time will now be lost in acting towards Sicily with that degree of firmness and wisdom, which can alone restore the confidence of its inhabitants, and firmly establish our own interests in the Mediterranean.

With respect to the present situation of those places which are described in this volume, very little remains to be said: Tripoly and Tunis are distinguished by the same attributes whether civil or political, which characterized them in 1812. An embassador is already on his way to the shores of Barbary from our government: let us hope that his labours in that part of the world will be crowned with success, and that for the future, instead of insult and imposition, we shall

experience civility and respect from those lawless depredators.. As to Malta, there was a commission sent out there in May last, for the purpose of inquiring into the state of the tribunals and other branches of the civil administration; no change whatever having resulted from its report, we are naturally to conclude that an alteration in the condition of that important island is unnecessary.

I cannot conclude without congratulating his Majesty's government and my country upon the glorious events which have once more shed a ray of hope on the desponding powers of the North. Aided by such insurmountable natural causes, the common enemy has been humbled beyond conception. To complete what Providence has begun, we only want a union of talent and virtue; indeed it seems that Heaven, wearied with the sufferings of Europe, has at length interposed and ordained the fall of a tyrant, who like Philip and Alexander, was born to become the scourge of human nature, and in whose overthrow the nations of Europe are more deeply interested than those of Greece were in that of the former enemies of public liberty and happiness.

London, May, 1813.

APPENDIX.

DOCUMENTS ILLUSTRATIVE OF VOL. I.

No. I.

Translated Extracts, with Remarks, from the CXVI. Session of the Sicilian Parliament, held at Cefalu, forty-eight Miles from Palermo, July 7, 1774; tending to shew the Nature of that Body, its Forms and Privileges.

"Cephaludi die nona Julii 7, Ind. 1774.

"Apud placentissimam civitatem Cephaludi, et in palatio episcopali civitatis ejusdem coram illustrissimo et excellentissimo domino d' Joanne Fogliani de Aragona, marchione de Pellegrino, &c., Pro-rege et Capitaneo Generali in hoc Siciliæ regno pro eadem Sacra Regia Majestate, et coram sacro regio consiglio fuit per me D' Ignatium Papè, ducem Jampilerii, prothonotarium, et logothetam hujus prædicti regni, &c., &c., &c.

"Illustrious and most excellent Signor Don Giovanni Fogliani of Arragon, marquis of Pellegrino, &c. &c. &c., viceroy and captain general of the kingdom of Sicily, having, on the 6th instant, in pursuance of your Excellency's order, convoqued the three branches of the kingdom, ecclesiastical, military, and demanial, in this most agreeable city of Cefalu, at the grand hall of the episcopal palace, your Excellency being seated on the throne, directed me, Don Ignazio Papè, duke of Giampilieri, prothonotary of the kingdom, to read and make known the following declaration:

"Reflecting on the clemency and munificence of his majesty our master, and also that unwearied zeal in the royal service

hitherto expressed by this respectable assemblage, representing the whole kingdom, and composing the general parliament, I recognize, in the first, that paternal anxiety with which his Majesty has ever been inclined to improve and render happy these his people, and to study every means of promoting their welfare;—so, in the other, do I perceive that studious solicitude with which you have ever come forward, when necessary, to contribute to the wants of the state; the most efficacious argument, and inestimable proof, of your innate fidelity, and obsequious gratitude for the favours of your sovereign," &c.

[After a great number of compliments alternately paid to his majesty and the parliament, during which the wants of the state are frequently alluded to, the prothonotary expresses a hope that they will cherish no other wish on this occasion than that of employing in their master's service not only their property but very lives. The last part of this address, while it anticipates a liberal supply, contains a promise from the viceroy that, in his turn, he will use every interest with the king to procure an acquiescence in all the wishes of the parliament; upon which the body proceed to execute the various objects of the session; and when concluded, a report is made in the form of an answer to the viceroy in the following manner:]

"Marquis Fogliani,

"It is a source of the highest displeasure to the three branches, ecclesiastical, military, and demanial, representing this kingdom, that in consequence of the notorious scarcity occasioned by unforeseen events, and other causes, every class of the community feel themselves unable to bear heavier burdens, and thereby prove their devotion to our royal master; who, with a zeal beyond expression, is only intent on bestowing favors, and increasing the happiness of the most obsequious people," &c.

[After a long string of compliments, of which it would be difficult to convey an adequate idea in our language, the various donations are named, together with the purposes for which they are made. The specific sums to be paid by each branch is then regulated. After which the most minute details are entered into as to the manner in which the taxes are to be levied, so as to

prevent injustice either towards the sovereign or people. It is also remarkable, that a proportion of the burdens are paid by all the strangers living and settled in the island. When all the particulars relative to grants and taxes are thus arranged, the prothonotary closes the report; after which another is made out, entitled "Capitoli delle Grazie dimandate concordamente de tutti li tre Bracci," &c.—"Article of Grace unanimously demanded by the three Branches." The first chapter relates to a misapplication of the donations established to support gallies, and other vessels of war, destined to defend the trade and coasts against the Barbary corsairs: it begins in this way—

"The unfortunate vicinity of this island to the Barbarians, who, without incurring any risk, continue to make numerous reprisals, both on the coast and adjacent seas, is the reason that the people of Sicily are kept in such a state of consternation that rather than incur any more losses, they are reduced to the sad necessity of finding their security in a state of poverty," &c.

The remainder of this spirited and well written paper goes to point out various hardships felt by the trading interest, and others; and concludes by imploring his Majesty to remove the causes, &c. The dates and signatures are Latinized. Cephaludi nona Julii, 1744, ex parte.

Transmittatur ad suam regiam majestatem. I. Ignatius Papè, Prothonotarius.

The second chapter of Demands complains bitterly against the mode of conferring ecclesiastical pensions, it begins thus:

"The youth of Sicily languish in idleness and misery: their talents remain unmatured, because they are unaided by hope, and in total want of encouragement to help them on. If a fund of beneficence were destined to stimulate their zeal and inclinations, they would soon become fervent in their application, and more willing to suffer the hardships of a long probation, so necessary to establish that merit which might render them worthy of the king's service," &c. After quoting a number of laws, in support of this argument, particularly one of Alphonso, instituted in 1418, "ut nullus extraneus in nostris regnis habere possit beneficia, et pensiones," and also noticing that this law is

strictly executed against them in Naples, the document, still more energetic than the former, concludes by appealing strongly to the feelings of his Majesty for a redress of the grievance complained of; and is signed like the preceding.

Chapter the third contains a request from the ecclesiastical branch that his Majesty would be pleased to restore certain funds of which the clergy had been deprived in 1772.

The fourth chapter is most ably drawn up, and relates to the dreadful state of interior communication, entire want of roads either for military or commercial purposes, absolute necessity of correcting the evils arising to the nation from such a situation, and pointing out various remedies, together with those funds which are in the sovereign's power to appropriate in that way. In conclusion, it is proposed, that all the convicts condemned to hard labour for a period of years shall forthwith be employed under proper guards, to improve the old roads and make new ones, &c.

Chapter the *fifth* contains a request, in the name of the three branches, that his Majesty would be pleased to grant the privilege of a senate to the city of Cefalu, &c.

Chapter the sixth proposes, that in consequence of there being no place of refuge for the coasting trade between Palermo and Messina, a mole shall be constructed at Cefalu; the manner in which this important work is to be completed, necessary funds, and class of persons to be employed, occupy the remainder of the chapter.*

Chapter the seventh, and last, relates to several abuses in the criminal court, and requests certain appointments to be made in them by his Majesty.

Upon the foregoing documents being communicated to the Viceroy, a general answer is given by him to the Deputation of the Kingdom, in the name of his Majesty; wherein he either accedes or refuses their request of parliament according to circumstances; and then the session closes.

* The mole has never been even begun.

No. II.

Illustrations of Sicilian Poetry.

Sti silenzii, sta virdura,
Sti muntagni, sti vallati
L'ha criatu la natura
Pri li cori innamurati.

Lu susurru di li frundi,
Di lu sciumi lu lamentu,
L'aria, l'ecu, chi rispundi
Tuttu spira sentimentu.

Dda farfalla accussì vaga;
Lu muggitu di li tori;
L'innoccenza, chi vi appaga;
Tutti parranu a lu cori.

Stu frischettu insinuanti
Chiudi un gruppu di piaciri;
Accarizza l'alma amanti;
E ci arrobba li suspiri.

Cca l'armuzza li soi porti
Apri tutti a lu dilettu;
Sulu è indignu di sta sorti,
Cui nun chiudi amuri in pettu.

Sulu è reu, cui pò guardari
Duru, e immobili sta scena;
Ma lu stissu nun amari,
E' delittu insemi, e pena.

Donna bella senza amuri,
E' una rosa fatta in cira;
Senza vezzi, senza oduri,
Chi nun veggeta, ne spira.

Sti. *Questi.*—Dda. *Quella.*—Frischettu. *Zefiretto, o venticello.*—Ci arrobba *Le ruba.*—Cca. *Quà.*—L'armuzza. *Vezzegg. d' anima.*—Soi porti. *Sue porte.*—Cui pò. *Chi può.*

Tu nun parri, o Dori mia?
Stu silenziu mi spaventa;
E' possibili, ch' in tia
Qualch' affettu nun si senta?

LU GESUMINU.

Gesuminu, tu m' ammaschi;
E non viju lu pirchì!
Stari in menzu di sti raschi,
Nu lu negu, ch' è un gran-chì.

Ma li Rosi, e l'Amaranti
C' aju vistu, unni sì tu;
Un' onuri datu a tanti,
E' finutu, 'un vali chiù.

Cu ssa boria, e ssa livata,
Tu ti cridi quasi un Re?
Ma nun passa ssa jurnata,
Ca finisci cu l' olè.

Supra Donni lu sò fastu
Nuddu mai fundari pò;
Forsi v' amanu, ma a tastu;
Oggi sì, dumani nò.

Vidi 'nterra spampinatu
Ddu galofaru, ch' è ddà?
Chistu ajeri fu aduratu,
Comu nautra Deità.

Ora 'un tocca chiù cantusciu;
Si ci spii, dici: oimè!
Pirchì sugnu afflittu, e musciu,
Pietà pri mia 'un ci nn'è!

In tia. *In te.*—M' ammaschi. *Mi fai il sostenuto, in atto minaccevole.*—Raschi. *Fior di latte; qui è allegoria.*—C' aju. *V'ho.*—Unni sì. *Dove sei.*—'Un. *Non.*—Chiù. *Più.*—Ssa livata. *Cote sta andatura superba.*—Ssa jurnata. *Questo giorno.*—Olè. *Interjezione di gabbo, fatto altrui.*—Nuddu. *Nessuno.*—À tastu. *Al assaggio.*—Ddu. *Quel.*—Ddà. *Colà.*—Chistu. *Questo.*—Nautra. *Altra.*—'Un. *Non.*—Cantusciu. *Veste donnesca.*—Si ci spii. *Se gli chiedi.*—Sugnu. *Sono.*—Musciu. *Vizzo.*—Pri mia. *Per me non ve n' è.*

Benchì elettu ntra li sciuri,
Gesuminu, ora sì tu;
Forsi avrai pri successuri
Li chiù tinti, chi ci sù.

Chi unni regna l' incostanza,
E' cuccagna; e sai pirchì?
Pirchì ogn' unu avi spiranza,
Oggi nò, dumani sì.

ELEGIA.

Venerandu Silenziu, chi t' aggiucchi
'Mmenzu li rami di sta silva oscura,
Unn' autri nun ti sturbanu, chi Cucchi:
Scusa, s' eu vegnu in chista insolit' ura
A sturbari li toi muti riposi,
Cu chianciri la mia mala vintura:
O Petri, o Trunchi, o duri, e surdi Cosi
Felici, chi di stupida sustanza
Natura Matri cingiri vi vosi.
Ahimè! chi lu miu cori è fattu stanza
Di pietusa mestizia pri lu sensu,
Chi Natura ci misi in abbundanza!
Amu pri miu turmentu, oimè! si penzu;
Amu, s'eu dormu; ed amirò a la fossa
Cinniri nuda senza miu cunsensu.
Ahimè! ch' ogni mia fibbra appena smossa
Trema tutta, si scoti, e un sulu sguardu
M' arriva a penetrari sin' all' ossa.
L' imagini di Chidda, pri cui ardu,
Mi stà accussì ntra l'occhi, chi a stu puntu
Mi pari, chi ci parru, e chi la guardu.

Ntra li Sciuri. *Fra li Fiori.*—Chiù tinti. *Più vili.*—Chi ci su. *Che vi sono.*—Unni. *Dove.*—Aggiucchi. *Annidi.*—Sta. *Questa.*—Unn' autri. *Dove altri.*—Cucchi. *Civette.*—Scusa. *Perdona.*—Chista. *Questa.*—Chianciri. *Piangere.*—Vosi. *Volle.*—Chi ci parru. *Che a lei parlo.*

Vita di l' arma mia, eccumi juntu
Pr' amari a tia, 'ntra sti penusi istanti . . .
M' ahimè! ca sfui, e nun mi duna cuntu?
L' Ervi, e li Trunchi, chi mi sù davanti,
Sclamanu in ogni motu, in ogni gestu:
Unn' è la vita tua, miseru amanti?
D' unni mi votu, oimè! chiù mi funestu.
Tenebri, orruri, luttu, crepacori
Taciti, oimè! chi d' un Jacobu mestu,
Sentu na vuci, chi mi dici; mori.

CANZUNA.

Giovi guardau da la sua Reggia immensa
La bella Villa di la Bagaria;
Unni l' arti impetrisci, eterna, e addensa
L' abborti di bizzarra fantasìa;
Viju, dissi, la mia insufficiensa,
Mostri n'escogitai, quantu putìa;
Ma duvi terminau la mia putensa,
Ddà stissu incominciau Palagunìa.

No. III.

TREATY WITH SICILY.

Treaty of Alliance and Subsidy between his Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and His Majesty the King of the two Sicilies. Signed at Palermo, 30th March, 1808.

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, and His Majesty the King of the two Sicilies, being equally animated by a sincere desire of strengthening more and more the ties of friendship and good under-

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Juntu. *Giunto.*—Ntra sti. *Intorno questi.*—Ca sfui. *Che sfugge.*—Duna cuntu? *Risponde?*—Ervi. *Erbe.*—Chi mi sù. *Che mi sono.*—D' unni mi votu. *Da dove mi volgo.*—Chiù. *Più.*—Nà. *Una.*—Upni. *Dove.*—Viju. *Vedo.*—Ddà stissu. *Colà appunto.*

standing which so happily subsist between them, have judged, that nothing could contribute more efficaciously to that salutary end, than the conclusion of a treaty of alliance and subsidy; for this purpose their said Majesties have named their respective plenipotentiaries, viz. his Britannic Majesty, the Right Honourable William Drummond, one of his Majesty's most honorable privy council, and his envoy extraordinary, and minister plenipotentiary at the court of his said Sicilian Majesty; and his Majesty the King of the two Sicilies, the right illustrious and right excellent Thomas de Somma, Marquis de Circello, &c., &c., &c., who, after having communicated their respective full powers, have agreed upon the following articles:

ART. 1. There shall be a continuance of sincere and constant friendships between his Britannic Majesty, and his Majesty the King of the two Sicilies, their heirs and successors, which has always subsisted up to the present time.

ART. 2. *The two high contracting parties shall afford to each other, during the present war with France, every succour and assistance, in proportion to their respective forces,* and *shall prevent, by common consent,* every thing that can cause them trouble or detriment.

ART. 3. His Majesty the King of the two Sicilies engages to grant to the troops of His Britannic Majesty, stationed in the fortresses of Sicily, and to all British ships of war, an exemption from all duties belonging to him, upon every thing of which the British squadrons in the Mediterranean, and the troops of that nation, may stand in need, and which the country can furnish in provisions, food, and military and naval stores.

ART. 4. His Sicilian Majesty being desirous of giving an additional proof of the sentiments by which he is animated, also engages to exempt from all duties belonging to him upon such provisions as may be requisite for the British ships of war at Malta, as well as all military stores which are to be found in the country; on the condition, however, that each vessel or vessels of war be furnished with a requisition from the governor of the said island, which shall specify the articles and quantity required.

ART. 5. His Sicilian Majesty further engages, in virtue of the present treaty, never to allow the enemies of Great Britain to bring into any of his ports during the present war, any British ships taken by the enemies of Great Britain.

ART. 6. His Sicilian Majesty also engages to open the ports of the two Sicilies during the present war to British squadrons, as well as to all merchant and other ships belonging to British subjects, without any restrictions whatever, referring to the third article with respect to exemption from duties.

ART. 7. His Britannic Majesty engages in return, to defend, during the present war, the fortresses of Messina and Agusta, and to maintain there for that purpose, at his charge, and expense, a body of troops, which, in the present war, shall consist of 10,000 men, and to augment their number if the case shall require it, the disposition of which troops in the said fortresses shall be in such manner, and proportion as the commanding officers (to whom every requisite facility shall be given) shall judge expedient; and his Britannic Majesty stipulates, that the said general officers shall have the power of exercising the martial law in the above mentioned garrisons, with respect to their British troops, in the same manner and according to the same rules, as are observed in other English garrisons; quarters for the said troops shall be provided in the above mentioned fortresses by his Sicilian Majesty.

ART. 8. His Britannic Majesty further engages to pay to his Sicilian Majesty, *during the continuance of the present war*, an annual subsidy of 300,000*l.** sterling, (to commence from the 10th of February, 1805, when the British and Russian troops land in the Neapolitan territory,) payable at the rate of 25,000 pounds per month, which payment shall always be made one month in advance, computing from the date of the signature of the present treaty, HIS SICILIAN MAJESTY PURPORTING TO EMPLOY THE SAID SUBSIDIES FOR THE USE OF HIS MARINE AND OF HIS LAND FORCES, *shall regulate the distribution of them in such proportion as these two services may require, for the defence of his states, and for operations against the common*

* This was increased to 400,000*l.* on the first of May, 1811.

enemy; and an account shall be given every three months to the British government, of the manner in which his Sicilian Majesty shall have employed the subsidies paid to him by Great Britain.

ART. 9. The two high contracting parties desiring to strengthen more and more the ties which unite the two nations, and to extend their mutual relations, will employ themselves as soon as possible in concluding a treaty of commerce, the articles of which shall be equally advantageous to the subjects of both states.

ART. 10. His Sicilian Majesty engages not to conclude with France a peace separate from England; and his Britannic Majesty, on his part, also engages not to make a peace with France without comprehending and saving in it the interests of his Sicilian Majesty.

ART. 11. The present treaty of alliance and subsidy shall be ratified by the two high contracting parties, and the ratification shall be exchanged, in due form, in London, within the space of four months from the date of its signature, or sooner if possible. In witness whereof, we, the undersigned, furnished with full powers, have signed the present treaty, and have thereunto affixed the seal of our arms.

(Signed,) W. DRUMMOND—THOMAS DE SOMMA.

No. IV.

Extracts from a Pamphlet prepared for the Press by a Merchant in Palermo, and Printed at London by Galabin and Marchant, Ingram Court, Fenchurch Street, for Private Use; and which serves to elucidate the General Reasonings on Commercial Abuses.

Representation of the British Merchants of Palermo to the British Consul-General.

Palermo, February 24, 1811.

We, the British merchants resident in Palermo, and on behalf of our brethren in Sicily, whose suffrages we anticipate,

represent to Robert Fagan, Esq. his Britannic Majesty's consul-general for Sicily and Malta, and the islands adjacent:

That an edict has been published by the crown of this kingdom, imposing a tax of one per cent. on money on its circulation, and replete with specific forms, for regulating banking transactions, and receipting payments, attaching in the operation one per cent. for the extraordinary branch of the royal expenditure.

That this edict has been understood by the Sicilian subjects as involving also in the observance thereof the British mercantile residents now in this country.

That, under this impression, some inconvenience hath already occurred, and much more will be experienced, if the delusion be not speedily corrected by a public and royal mandate, exempting officially the British merchants from an observance of the edict.

We do not obtrude our reasons for supposing ourselves exempt from the obligations of this edict; for, did it apply to us, it would certainly condemn British commerce to a civil death, and interdict it in the kingdom of Sicily. On the contrary, we know that our commercial rights and privileges in this country are guaranteed to us by national interests and friendly alliances, which it can never be his Sicilian Majesty's intention to violate; and, therefore, we do not insinuate that the edict, in any way, applies to us; but, in consequence of the above mentioned misapprehension of the Sicilian subjects, so injurious to our concerns, we do represent to his Britannic Majesty's consul-general the imperious necessity there is that he uses his immediate and urgent endeavours with the Sicilian government to obtain from it an official and public declaration, to the Sicilian subjects, of the definite and specific import of this edict, so far as the commercial intercourse of the British subject is involved with that of the Sicilian.

Signed by all the British merchants resident in Palermo.

The Substance of a Letter from Mr. Fagan to the Marquis Circello, accompanying the Representation of the British Merchants of Palermo, dated February 24, 1811.

Palermo, February, 26, 1811.

I have the honour of transmitting to your Excellency a copy of an address from the British merchants, directed to me, relative to the last tax imposed on all receipts and payments.

Your Excellency will permit me to solicit the indulgence of an answer thereto as early as convenient, as I have induced the gentlemen to relinquish the intention they had signified of refusing, for the interval, to continue their negotiations. Your Excellency will be aware that such an unexpected suspension of their business might probably be productive of some unpleasant sensation in the Sicilian mind. ROBERT FAGAN.

The Marquis Circello's Answer.

Palermo, March 2.

Sir, I have the honour to communicate, for the information of the merchants, so much of the reply of his Excellency the Marquis Circello to my letter of the 26th of February, which accompanied the representation of the merchants of the 24th instant, as relates thereto.

"The English merchants, as well as any other foreigners resident in Palermo, or settled in any part of the kingdom, have liberty to remove with all their effects from the kingdom of Sicily, when and where they please: or they shall be subject to whatever imposition or tax his Sicilian Majesty's government shall think necessary to impose, as all foreigners are in whatever country or under whatever title they may be established."

ROBERT FAGAN.

Mr. Fagan's Communication of his Suspension by this Government.

(COPY.)

Palermo, 18 Maggio, 1811.

Il Ré há ordinato al Marchese di Circello, di far noto al Signor Roberto Fagan, che rimane sospesa ogni comunicazione

trá il governo di Sua Maestá ed il medesimo, al che il Marchese di Circello adempie nel ripetersi.

(Segnato) IL MARCHESE DI CIRCELLO.

(TRANSLATION.)

Palermo, 18th May, 1811.

The King has commanded the Marquis of Circello to inform Mr. Robert Fagan, that all communication between his Majesty's government and him is suspended, which the Marquis of Circello notices accordingly.

(Signed) THE MARQUIS OF CIRCELLO.

Palermo, May 20th, 1811.

Gentlemen, I have the honour of handing you an extract from a dispatch, addressed to me, by his Excellency the Marquis Circello, his Sicilian Majesty's minister, for your guidance and regulation in any commercial concerns, wherein you may stand in need of the assistance, support, or protection, of his Britannic Majesty's *consul*. ROBERT FAGAN.

Letter of Thanks from the Palermo Merchants, to Robert Fagan, Esq. his Britannic Majesty's Consul-General, &c. &c., dated 21st of May, 1811.

Sir, We have been favoured with your communication of the 20th of May, 1811, acquainting us that the government of his Sicilian Majesty has suspended your official correspondence with his Sicilian Majesty's government.—So extraordinary a measure rather concerns than surprizes us, as we have, for a long time, witnessed, on the part of his Sicilian Majesty's government, a direct opposition to our commercial interests, which you, as a public functionary appointed by his Britannic Majesty, are bound to protect and support. We, however, cannot omit expressing our anxiety at the absence of a British embassador,—now that the consular authority of his Britannic Majesty is no longer respected and accredited by the court of Sicily; and we will thank you to acquaint us to whom we should apply, in case of need, for support, during the suspension of your official communication with this government.

We feel it our incumbent duty, on this occasion, to assure you of our unanimous and most cordial approbation of your conduct in the discharge of your consular duties, during the short time you have, so honourably to yourself and so zealously for your country, filled that important office; and we shall ever retain a lively sense of our obligation for your disinterested exertions in behalf of our commercial rights and privileges, which, if some times unavailing, have always been exercised by you with cheerfulness, industry, and unremitted zeal.—And we earnestly hope that his Britannic Majesty will be graciously pleased to restore you to us, with full consular authority, which, in our opinion, the honour of our country requires, and we are very sure our interests particularly demand.

Signed by the majority of the Palermo Merchants.

Letter of Thanks from the British Merchants of Messina to Mr. Fagan.

Messina, June 3, 1811.

Sir, Through the British pro-consul, resident in this place, John Bowmester, Esq. we have received intelligence that the Sicilian government has thought proper to suspend all official communication with you as British consul-general in Sicily, which measure, considering the general conduct of that government, rather creates indignation than surprize in our minds.

We cannot, however, abstain from expressing our feelings on this subject, and our regret that the British government, which contributes so largely to the support of this country, as well as yourself personally, should have been subject to so great an insult; and we cannot but view this unwarrantable measure as adapted expressly with the consideration, that, being at the same time without any resident minister at this court, they would thereby be furnished with opportunities of trampling on our rights and privileges, in consequence of our having no one to stand, in a public character, in defence of them.

We cannot let this opportunity pass by without repeating the sentiments of approbation, which we have before expressed, of your zealous discharge of the duties attached to your station;

and more particularly our acknowledgments of the warm interest you have always taken in support of the commercial rights of the British subjects settled in this island, although your exertions have not always been attended with the success you would have wished.

We are not without hopes that such outrageous conduct, on the part of the Sicilian court, being laid before the British government, we shall yet see you resume your full power and authority as British consul-general in Sicily, which re-instatement would, we are confident, not only be gratifying to all British subjects resident in this island, but highly for the honor and advantage of the British government.

Signed by the majority of the British Merchants in Messina.

Mr. Douglass's Letter to Mr. Fagan.

Palermo, June 6, 1811.

Sir, I have the honour to acquaint you, that, in a letter from the Marquis of Circello, *dated* June 5th, his Excellency has assured me, that his official letter to you, dated May 18th, was for the purpose of suspending your correspondence with the Sicilian government, and not the suspension of your consular functions with the same. I think it my duty to acquaint you with this circumstance, in order that you may renew the exercise of your consular functions in all matters where official business requires communication with the Sicilian government.

ANDREW SNAPE DOUGLASS.

Mr. Fagan's Statements to the Commercial Society relative to Mr. Douglass's Information, that he was not suspended.

Palermo, June 7, 1811.

Gentlemen, I have the honour to hand you an official note I have just received from Mr. Douglass, his Britannic Majesty's secretary of legation; in which, you will find, he informs me, it was not the intention of his Sicilian Majesty's government to suspend my consular functions with the same. This appeared to me an object of such consequence to your interest, that I do not delay a moment in remitting to you this document.

ROBERT FAGAN.

From the Same to the Same.

Palermo, June 7, 1811.

Gentlemen, I have the honour to inform you, that, in consequence of Mr. Douglass's communication on the subject of continuing my consular functions with his Sicilian Majesty's government, I waited (in person) with Mr. Walsh, his Britannic Majesty's vice-consul, on the consultore Troisi, judge of the court of prizes, and demanded if I should meet with any obstacle in appearing at that tribunal, for the defence of the Greek polacre Conception, on which a piracy had been committed; or if he would receive any representation on this subject. He answered me, that he should be happy, on all occasions, to converse with me, as an individual, on that business; but that, in the tribunal, he could no longer consider me his Britannic Majesty's consul-general, or receive my representations in that character. These being the orders he had received from his master, the king of the two Sicilies, you will, therefore, gentlemen, regulate yourselves accordingly. ROBERT FAGAN.

The Second Petition of the British Merchants Resident in the Kingdom of Sicily, and domiciliated in Palermo, to the Right Honourable the Lords President and Board of Council for Trade and Plantations.

Palermo, June 6, 1811.

Humbly sheweth,—

Sect. 1.—That, in a general petition of the British merchants resident in the kingdom of Sicily, dated the 27th day of May, 1811, praying the right honourable the lords president and board of council, the 26th, 45th, and 51st sections shewed,—

" 26.—That an edict of the crown, dated February the 15th, 1811, imposes a tax of one per cent. on the receipt of money and all banking transactions.

" 45.—That, on the 26th day of May, 1811, a tax of one per cent. was imposed on the estimation of all merchandize

entered in the custom-house of Palermo, from the 23rd day of February, 1811.*

"51.—That every day some novel, extraordinary, and arbitrary, contribution, or imposition, involves British commerce in increasing difficulties."

2.—That, in confirmation of the truth of the sections quoted above, an additional requisition has been made on British commerce of a nature still more oppressive than the above-cited impositions.

3.—That the administrator, assessor, or receiver, the Marquis Ferreri, under the title of administrator of the tax of February the 15th, 1811, did, on the 31st of May, 1811, levy another requisition on foreign† merchandize, in the following manner:—

"Every dealer in foreign merchandize in ten days, from the 27th day of May, 1811, shall deliver into the office of the secretary of the custom-house an exact inventory of all the merchandize he has *in his* warehouses, both in and out of the custom-house, whether landed for consumption, or warehoused for trans-shipment, leaving a blank column in the inventory for the appraiser appointed to put the estimate price against the articles specified; and upon the sum total of this estimate every merchant shall pay, within twenty days from the 27th day of May, 1811, a requisition of one per cent., and the inventory shall contain a full and true statement of all the goods which may have been landed at any antecedent period up to the present time, so that every and all his stock contributes to this requisition: and if any suspicion shall arise, that any particular inventory be not a true and faithful reveal, his Majesty will suddenly, and without any previous notice to the merchant, cause an inventory to be taken of such merchandize, by the

* The estimate (nearly) exceeds double the value of the goods estimated, and therefore is equal to two per cent. on the goods, though it is called one per cent.

† The term foreign merchandize is used, but British is intended, Sicily having very little general commerce at the present time.

officers to be appointed by the secretary of the custom-house for that object; and if any error or misnomer be detected in the inventory already given in by the merchant, such penalty and punishment as shall please his Majesty will be inflicted on the merchants so offending."

4.—That the tax of February the 15th, of one per cent. on circulating money and banking transactions not being productive to the extent which had been anticipated, foreign merchandize is now made responsible for the deficit.*

5.—That the censor, assessor, or administrator, of the tax of February the 15th, 1811, has arbitrarily levied on other objects a tax originally imposed on the receipts of money and banking transactions, without repealing the primitive imposition.

6.—That, instead of repealing it, it has been doubled by a new order of the administrator, dated May the 31st, which order imposes, that, in forming a written security for monies advanced, lent, or on debts arising from purchase or credit, or otherwise contracted, the written security or claim is not valid, till one per cent. has been exacted by the crown; and the acquittal on payment, restitution, or discharge of such debt, is not valid, till a further one per cent. be exacted from the legal extinction of the written security.

7.—That this acknowledged despotism is subversive of all public right, and subjects the private property of an individual unconditionally to the assumptive and rapacious will of a tax-receiver.

8.—That the open violation of the admitted maxims of common justice, unsanctioned by any written law or known usage, except in Sicily, demonstrates, beyond the possibility of a doubt, the determination of the Sicilian government to oppress the

* Don Javered Simonetti, speaking of the system of tributes in Sicily, says, it contains a mass of disorders, in which no rule of proportion among the various classes of those who are taxed is considered, but merely the caprice of those who regulate them, *i. e.* the administrators.

Don Javered Simonetti's book, in which he writes as above, was written about thirty years since.

British merchant,* and to hold his property amenable for the failure of its schemes of taxation and finance.

9.—That levying requisitions on property warehoused for trans-shipment is unprecedented, the usage hitherto in Sicily having been to exempt from taxation merchandize landed for trans-shipment, and to exact the duties on sales.

10.—That the present requisition affects not only the sales now making, and all those which have been made since the 23rd of February, 1811, but includes also the merchandize which, till this moment, by right founded on the assent of the sovereign, is exempted from all duty and taxation.

11.—That all these violations, outrages, extortions, and requisitions, loudly call for a commercial treaty between Great Britain and Sicily, definite in point of duty, to be paid on British merchandize; and unalterable, but by the mutual consent of their relative governments.

12.—That where the duties on merchandize are assessed on an arbitrary estimation, as in Sicily, and that estimation greatly surpasses the actual value so assessed, common justice requires there should be a reciprocity in the conditions between the foreign government and the mercantile subjects of a power in amity with that foreign government.

13.—That, in all countries where a per centage is taken *ad valorem*, as duty to secure the interests of the revenue from false declaration on the entry of merchandize, the comptroller of the customs may legally take the goods or merchandize at the declared value on entry, paying the merchant ten per cent. advance upon his declared invoice, and also the legitimate charges on that invoice.

14.—That there is no inducement for the government to take the merchandize of a foreign merchant, and to pay him for the same in a country as in Sicily, where the estimate of his mer-

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* In the second representation of the British ministers, see porto-franco laws for Messina, and the 41st section of the petition to the board of council &c., in which the grant of landing for trans-shipment in Palermo is noted 1805. The above notations apply to the ninth section.

chandize exceeds the rate of his sales from fifteen to forty per cent. after all charges, local duties, and expenses, have been added thereto.

15.—That if the estimation be a fair valuation, the government would gain by paying the merchant the prices it fixes on his merchandize; and no reasoning can be more feasible than appealing to the sense of right, by which, it is presumed, this same government has determined that the merchandize so estimated is actually worth what it is valued at.

16.—That, in forming a treaty of commerce with a government that fixes a general tarif of prices on foreign merchandize, as is the plan in Sicily, a provision is indispensably necessary for the rule of reciprocity, conformably with the suggestion of the 12th section of this petition.

17.—That this proviso will check and regulate the estimate prices of commodities subject to fluctuation, and protect legal commerce from the exorbitant and intolerable burthens to which it is exposed by the scheme of an arbitrary and capricious estimation of the value of foreign merchandize.

18.—That if a commercial treaty be made with his Sicilian Majesty's government, an article or clause in that treaty of the following tenor and effect, if respected by that government, would remedy the abuses complained, viz.—

"If in any case the estimation of the value of British merchandize, articles of manufacture, or other objects of commerce, do exceed the original cost of such objects of commerce, the rate or proportion of ten per cent. more than its prime cost or first value, then the British merchant may of right, but at his own option, abandon all such merchandize so over estimated, and the secretary, cashier, or treasurer of the customs, without any appeal or reserve whatever, will pay or cause to be paid immediately, and without delay, to the proprietor, importer, or person legitimately owning the said goods, in good and effective money, at the current rate of exchange for the pound sterling, all and every such first cost or original invoice of the merchandize so abandoned, with ten per cent. advance thereon, as also all the expenses of package, carriage, commission del credere,

insurance, freight, primage, porterage, and all other the usual and legitimate charges which the said merchandize has incurred, till the moment of such admitted abandonment."

The petition therefore earnestly and anxiously implores the right honourable lords the president and board of council for trade and plantations, to take into their able consideration the very distressing and afflicting situation of the British merchants resident in the kingdom of Sicily, and particularly of those domiciliated in Palermo, the alarming personal insecurity to which they are exposed during the suspension of the British consular authority with the government, the oppressive and unlimited requisitions on their property, and, above all, the studied vexations and hostile impediments to British commerce in general. The petition also humbly prays the right honourable lords the president and board of council for trade and plantations, with full submission to their lordship's better judgment, that, if in their wisdom a treaty of commerce with the kingdom of Sicily be deemed expedient, a clause or article conformably to the intention of the last section of this petition be solemnly ratified in that treaty, and the petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Crokat Wood, W. T. Turner, Baron Beverley, Thos. Mort and Co., Edmund Taunton, W. W. Barker, John Badge and Co., B. Ingham and Co.

Lord Amherst's Letter to Robert Fugan, Esq., dated July 17, 1810, on the Duties, &c., requesting Information for Lord Wellesley.

Palermo, July 17, 1810.

Sir, In consequence of instructions which I have received from Marquis Wellesley, I have to request that you will furnish me with a statement of the disadvantages to which the commercial intercourse of Great Britain with the island of Sicily is still exposed beyond that of other nations.

I allude particularly to the heavy duties paid at the custom house, and I am sure you will see the necessity of making your information as accurate as possible, when I tell you, that of two

reports which have been made to the British government, both in appearance equally official, one makes the duties paid by the British amount to from fifteen to twenty per cent., and the other to thirty-six per cent. more than are paid by goods from Germany or France. It is not to be expected that government will attend to any representations, on the face of which appears such inaccuracy and contradiction.

But, now that government has itself called for information upon this subject, I should be very glad that you, Sir, in conjunction with the British merchants at Palermo, would enable me to transmit to his Majesty's secretary of state a report, sufficiently clear and correct, to enable his Majesty's government to ground thereupon the arrangements which have been so long wanted for the regulation of commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Sicily. AMHERST.

Lord Amherst's Letter relative to his Sicilian Majesty's Promise to respect British Licenses.

Palermo, February 18, 1811.

Sir, I inclose to you a copy of a royal dispatch, which was communicated to me yesterday evening by the Marquis of Circello.

You will therein perceive, that his Sicilian Majesty has issued orders to his armed vessels and privateers, to respect such licenses as shall have been issued by his Majesty's privy council, or under the authority of the British government, to vessels under English colours, or under the colours of any power respectively neuter to Great Britain and Sicily.

You will farther perceive, that these orders are not made to extend to vessels belonging to any of the Barbary powers, although furnished with British licences. This question is now under discussion between the Prince Castelcicala and the British government.

In the mean time, I have thought it important to procure for British vessels, and for those sailing under colours respectively neutral, a security against similar violence to that practised in the case of the Marianna Emilia. AMHERST.

DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN VOL. II.

No. V.

Extract from the Tripoline Treaty concluded in 1751, *referred to in page* 40.

ARTICLE XXIV.—That his Britannic Majesty's subjects, over and above the stipulations contained in this and all former Treaties, shall enjoy all the privileges and advantages which now are, or which hereafter may be, granted to any of the subjects of the most favored nation.

No. VI.

Extract from Tunisian Treaty concluded in 1751, *and referred to in page* 258.

ARTICLE XXIV.—That his Britannic Majesty's subjects shall be always treated, by the state of Tunis, with the highest degree of respect, love, and honour; because the English, of all powers, are their first and best friends.

No. VII.

Limits of Tunisian Neutrality, referred to in page 265.

We, the undersigned, conceiving it of material consequence that officers, acting on some future occasion, should know at what distance from the Goletta vessels belonging to a nation at war with his Britannic Majesty are entitled to his Excellency the Bey of Tunis's protection, do certify, that (at an audience which the undersigned had this morning with his Excellency for the purpose of asserting our right to capture the French ship of war Le Duquesne, then moored in Tunis Bay beyond the range of cannon shot from any part of the shore) his Excellency the Bey resisted our claim on the plea of Le Duquesne being anchored in the Bay of Tunis, which he considered as formed by Cape Carthage, and that consequently any vessel within the Cape, although (from the extent of the Bay) she might be out of cannon shot from the shore, *was within the limits of neutrality.*

His Excellency, however, repeatedly observed, (which is of material consequence,) that the moment Le Duquesne, or any other French vessel, could be found outside of Cape Carthage, he should no longer consider her under his protection, but that he concurred in our right of taking her, provided she was (as expressed by treaty), beyond the range of cannon shot from the coast, outside of the said cape.

Given under our hands and seals, at Tunis, this first day of December, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three.

(Signed) ROBERT LINZEE.

(Signed) PERKINS MAGRA, *Consul-general.*

No. VIII.

CAPITULATION OF VALETTA, REFERRED TO IN PAGE 287.

Articles of Capitulation between the General of Division Vaubois, and Rear-Admiral Villeneuve, at Malta, on one Part; and Major-General Pigot, commanding the Troops of his Britannic Majesty and his Allies, and Captain Martin, commanding the British Squadron, and that of the Allies, on the other Part.

ARTICLE 1. The garrison of Malta, its forts and dependencies, will march out to be embarked and conveyed to Marseilles, on such day and hour as may be appointed, with all the honours of war, viz. drums beating, colours flying, preceded by two four pounders, with lighted matches, with their tumbrels; the artillery to serve them, and tumbrels for the infantry.

The officers of the Marine, as well Civil as Military; the sailors, and all persons belonging to that department, will in the same manner be conducted to Toulon.

ANSWER. The garrison shall receive the honours of war demanded; but as it is impossible the whole should be immediately embarked, the following arrangements will take place:

As soon as the Capitulation is signed, the forts of Ricazoli and Tignie will be delivered up to the British troops; and the British ships may enter the harbour.

The Porte Nationale shall be occupied by a guard, composed of French and English in equal numbers, until the vessels shall be ready to receive the first embarkation; when the whole garrison shall march out, with the honours of war, to the Marino, where they will lay down their arms. Those who cannot be of the first embarkation will occupy the Island of Fort Manuel, having an armed guard, to prevent any thing that may happen towards the country.—The garrison are to be considered as prisoners of war, and are not to serve against his Britannic Majesty, or his Allies, until exchanged; for which their respective officers will give their parole of honour.

All the artillery, ammunition, and public magazines, of whatever description, shall be delivered to Officers appointed to receive them; as well as inventories and public papers.

Art. II. The General of Brigade Chauer, Commandant of the Place and Forts; the General of Brigade Dheunezel, commanding the Artillery and the Engineers: the Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and Land Troops; the Officers, Soldiers, and crews; and all other persons employed in the Marine:

Citizen Pierre Alphonso Guyn, Commissary General of Commercial Affairs for the French Republic in Syria and Palestine, accidentally now at Malta with his family; those holding Civil and Military Employments; the Ordonnateurs and Commissaries of War and Marine; the Officers of the Civil Administration; and other Members of the Constituted Authority,—*shall retain their arms, personal effects, and property of every description.*

Ans. Granted; with the exception of the arms laid down by the soldiers, agreeable to the First Article; the Non-Commissioned Officers shall be allowed to retain their swords.

Art. III.—All persons having carried arms in the service of the Republic during the siege, of whatever nation, shall be considered as part of the garrison.

Ans.—Granted.

Art. IV.—The division will be embarked at the expense of his Britannic Majesty; every Officer, Soldier, or person in public employment, shall receive rations in proportion to their rank, according to the French regulations.

The Officers and Members of the Civil Administration who go to France, shall enjoy the same advantages, they and their families being rated agreeable to that military rank which corresponds to the dignity of their situations.

ANS.—Granted, as far as is conformable to the usage of the British Navy, which allows the same ration to every individual, of whatever rank or condition he may be.

ART. V.—The necessary number of carts and boats to transport and embark the personal effects of the Generals, their Aides-de-Camp, the Ordonnateurs, and Commissaries, the Chiefs of Corps, and Officers of Citizen Guyn; of the Officers of the Civil and Military Administrations, by land and sea, as well as the papers of the Councils and Administration of Corps; those of the Commissaries of War by Sea and Land; of the Paymasters of the Division, and the other officers of the Civil and Military Administrations: *these effects and papers are not to be subjected to any search; under a guarantee given by the French Generals that they do not contain any public or private property.*

ANS.—Granted.

ART. VI.—The ships belonging to the Republic that are fit to go to sea, shall depart at the same time with the division, to go to a port in France, after being furnished with the necessary provisions.

ANS.—Refused.

ART. VII.—The sick capable of being moved shall be embarked with their effects, and the Surgeons necessary to their being taken care of during the voyage, at the same time with the division, being furnished with provisions, surgical instruments, and Medicine chests: those who cannot be moved will be treated as their situation requires.

The General in Chief leaving at Malta a Physician and Surgeon, who will take care of them, they shall be furnished with quarters gratis if they should be moved from the hospital, and sent to France as soon as their situation admits of it, with every thing that belongs to them, in the same manner as the garrison. The Generals in Chief by Land and Sea, in evacuating Malta, entrust them to the generosity and humanity of the English Generals.

ANS.—Granted.

ART. VIII.—No individuals of whatever nation, inhabitants of the Island of Malta or otherwise, shall be in any manner molested for their political opinions, or for what they have done, or what has happened during the time that Malta has been in the hands of the French Government. This Article applies principally, and in its full extent, to those who have taken arms, or held employments, either Civil, Administrative, or Military; they are not to be called to account, or proceeded against for having done so, nor for what they may have done in the course of their employment.

ANS.—This article is not properly part of a Military Capitulation; but the inhabitants who wish to remain, or those who shall be permitted to remain, may be assured that they shall be treated with justice and humanity, and shall enjoy the full protection of the laws.

ART. IX.—The French in Malta, and the Maltese of every description, who wish to go to France, shall have permission to do so with their property. Those who have moveable or immoveable effects, that cannot be immediately sold, and who intend going to France, shall have six months from the date of this capitulation to sell their property: their property shall be respected; they may act for themselves if they remain, or by regular attornies if they sail with the division. When their business shall be finished, within the time stipulated, they shall be furnished with passports to go to France, carrying with them on board ship the moveables they shall choose to keep, as well as their capitals in specie, or bills of exchange, as may be most convenient.

ANS.—Granted; referring to the answer to the last article.

ART. X.—As soon as the capitulation shall be signed, the English general shall leave it in the power of the general commanding the French troops, whenever he chooses that they should depart, to send a felucca with the necessary crew, and an officer charged to carry the capitulations to the French government, for which the necessary safe conduct will be given.

ANS.—Granted.

ART. XI.—The Articles of the Capitulation being signed, the gate called Port de Bombes will be delivered to the English general; it will be occupied by an equal guard of English and French, who will have it in charge not to suffer any of the soldiers of the besieging army, or any of the inhabitants whatever of the island to enter, until the French troops shall be embarked, and out of sight of the harbour. By degrees, as the embarkation takes place, the English troops will occupy the posts which will give them the command of the place. The English General must be sensible that this precaution is indispensable, that there may be no subject of dispute, and that the capitulation may be religiously observed.

ANS.—Granted; according to the provisions contained in the answer to the first article: every precaution will be taken that the armed Maltese shall not approach the posts occupied by the French troops.

ART. XII.—All alienations, or sales of moveable or immoveable property whatever, by the French government while in possession of Malta, and all transactions between individuals, shall be held inviolable.

ANS.—Granted; as far as they shall be just and lawful.

ART. XIII.—The agents of the powers, allies to the French, who shall be in Valetta at the reduction of the place, shall not be molested in their persons or property, but shall be guaranteed by this capitulation.

ANS.—Granted.

ART. XIV.—Ships of war, or trading vessels, coming from France under the national flag, and presenting themselves at the harbour to enter, shall not be considered as prizes, nor shall their crews be made prisoners, for the first twenty days after the date of the present capitulation, but shall be sent back to France with convoy.

ANS.—Refused.

ART. XV.—The general in chief, and the other generals, shall be embarked with their Aides-de-Camp and the officers attached to them, as well as the ordonnateurs and their suites respectively, who shall not be separated.

ANS.—Granted.

ART. XVI.—The prisoners taken during the siege, including the crews of the ship Le Guillaume Tell, and the frigate La Diane, shall be restored, and treated as the garrison; also the crew of the frigate La Justice, if she should be taken on her voyage to any of the ports of the republic.

ANS.—The crew of Le Guillaume Tell are already exchanged, and that of La Diane shall be transported to Minorca, to be exchanged forthwith.

ART. XVII.—Every person in the service of the republic shall be exempt from any act of reprisal whatever, or under whatever pretext.

ANS.—Granted.

ART. XVIII.—If any doubt shall arise upon the terms of this capitulation, it shall be interpreted in favour of the garrison.

ANS.—Granted, according to justice.

Made and concluded at Malta the 5th day of September, 1800.

(L. S.) VAUBOIS.
(L. S.) VILLENEUVE.
(L. S.) H. PIGOT, Major-General.
(L. S.) GEO. MARTIN.

No. IX.

Extract from a Representation of the Creditors of Mr. Emanuel Magno, of Malta: exhibited as one Specimen of many Abuses in the Courts, referred to in page 302.

Mr. Magno stopped payment about sixteen months ago; and, as some of the creditors did not consent to give an immediate acquittance on receiving a dividend of the property, the remainder of it was deposited in the Maltese court. We have, by every means, endeavoured to obtain an equitable division of it, on any terms, but without success; and it was only a very short time ago, we indirectly learned, with surprise and indignation, that *the whole of it had been given out to deposit, and in full payment to various Maltese* creditors, who naturally availed themselves of the privilege, although so contrary to equity and reason that we could never suspect its existence. So little care and attention were paid by the court to an examination of those

people's demands, that the bankrupt himself declares *several received more than was actually due to them.*

We should have had some reason to complain had those persons received only a pro-rated dividend on their claims, previous to the books and concerns of the bankrupt being strictly examined; but we now find, that, by this truly unjust measure, a majority of the creditors are interested in preventing a final settlement, by which they would have to refund part of the money they so long enjoyed; and we further believe, that to enforce a re-deposit of this money, in order to obtain a general division of it amongst the creditors, we must commence a suit against the persons who now hold it on bail; that when a favorable sentence shall have been obtained, they have still the right of appeal; and if, after a lapse of time, we are so fortunate as to get a final sentence, we may have to commence separate suits against each individual, who will enjoy the same privilege of appeal.

We need not add now, that the laws are little understood by the English residents; all commercial confidence and credit is at an end, so far as it rests on any protection to be expected from those laws; but we hope and trust the great importance of the subject will lead to some change so essentially necessary for the prosperity of the island.

We are, Gentlemen,
Your obedient humble Servants,
&c. &c. &c.

No. X.

Extract from Representations of the British Merchants at Malta, referred to in page 317, and in 321.

In the month of May, 1810, a Maltese, named Francesco Mattei,* a principal member of one of the leading families in the island, and head of a very extensive mercantile establishment, obtained, from the house of Ralph Robinson and Co., the acceptance of that house to his draught of five thousand scudes, undertaking to get the bill discounted, and to give to them the

* The bishop's nephew.

proceeds; he accordingly got the bill discounted; but the money he immediately applied to his own purposes; and, after some days being elapsed, on being questioned by Ralph Robinson and Co. concerning the bill, he affirmed that he had lost it. On the 15th of August, however, this bill, becoming due, was, to the surprise of Messrs. R. and Co. presented to them for payment.

Obliged to honour their acceptance, it was left for them to sue Francesco Mattei in the court. In a case so glaring as this, and in every feature a direct fraud, they flattered themselves it would, even in the Maltese court, be brought to a speedy issue.

At first they hoped that some of the numerous and considerable relatives of this man would interfere to preserve, at least, his *moral character*. They were, however, obliged to enter their action, (that appearing the shortest method,) in the criminal court.

The regular processes of the courts were passed through, no means or attention neglected; but, in the course of four months, it was difficult to ascertain what progress had been made.

Adroit in every practice of delay, at times he would make propositions to accommodate; which, however, he would never fulfil. Pressing the affair in the court, through these evasions and delays, the proceedings were suddenly stayed, about the beginning of the present year, by that very frequent accident, or rather mal-practice in the court, the loss of all the papers.

Messrs. Robinson and Co. now found it necessary to go a second time over the ground they had already trod; and to spend another five months in order to bring the cause to the same stage. Thus baffled, and impatient at this most unjust deprivation of their property, and at the sneers with which the offender eluded justice, desired the holder of the bill, Mr. Matthew Fletcher, to commence an action for its amount in the commercial court against the defrauder, as the drawer; while, at the same time, they renewed the cause in the criminal court, on the ground of fraud. Mr. Fletcher, therefore, urged the matter in the *Consulato del Mare*, and after some three months of peculiar assiduity in the cause, and the expenditure of two hundred scudes, execution was at length obtained. It was then, and not

till then, that Francesco Mattei brought forward a paper signed by a few of his creditors allowing him the period of five years to pay to them his debts; and which concession on the part of these gave to him the privilege of obliging all others to leave to him the same unwarrantable indulgence.

Defeated in every respect in the *Consulato del Mare*, it remained to direct every effort in the criminal court; and here Messrs. R. and Co. now are, one year and six months after F. Mattei, as they may plainly call it, defrauded them of five thousand scudes: in the vain pursuit of which twelve per cent. of the money has been expended, and the affair remains apparently with no better prospect of success. One judge refused to take the cause under his cognizance: on what ground it is for him to explain.* *The civil commissioner was petitioned to appoint another, and he referred it, very fitly, to the same; but the judge, thus far, has done nothing in the business.*

It may be here added, in order to give an instance of the want of principle in the man thus protected by the court, that in the month of April last, a large and very valuable ship, called the Union, Captain Giovanni Battista Schembri, was in the port, which vessel was generally understood to be the property of F. Mattei; and he himself, at the same time, frequently pressed Messrs. R. and Co. to accept, in satisfaction of the debt, a bottomry bond on the ship. He, however, throwing in delays in making out the bond, and the Union being on the point of putting to sea, a sequester was, for security, placed on the vessel. It was then that the Captain, G. B. Schembri, came forward, through a notice from the court, and warned the sequestrator that the Union had, more than a year before, been sold by F. Mattei to him.

(Signed) MATHEW FLETCHER.

Malta, October 26, 1811.

* See the Letter on Malta, p. 321.

No. XI.

Proclamation at Malta, referred to in Page 335.

The king's civil commissioner observes with regret, that some weak and inconsiderate persons, deceived under specious pretexts, have suffered themselves to become the instruments of a few turbulent and factious individuals; they have been seduced to subscribe a paper purporting to be an application to the king for certain changes in the existing form of the government of these islands, but which is, in fact, a scandalous libel upon that government as hitherto administered, and the vehicle of private malignity.

The acts of his Majesty's former representatives are grossly and insidiously perverted; facts are misrepresented; and the revered memory of one, whose long administration, marked as it was by wisdom and mildness, and by the most distinguished benefits to those islands, had been sanctioned by the gracious approbation of his Sovereign, is ungratefully and vindictively traduced by an unfeeling and disappointed faction.

Whilst his Excellency feels himself called upon thus to animadvert upon a proceeding no less dishonorable to the parties concerned, than it is disrespectful to the government, he reflects with peculiar satisfaction that so small a number of individuals, and of those so very few of any respectability, have been seduced by the insidious arts so long and so industriously practised to mislead them. This consideration, added to the well-grounded confidence which the King's civil commissioner reposes in the loyalty and attachment of the Maltese at large, whose happiness has long been dear to him, and whose real interests his Excellency shall ever be solicitous to promote, enables him to exercise more generally towards a misguided few the lenity and forbearance which have ever characterized his Majesty's government in these islands. Few, indeed, and prejudiced must those Maltese be, who are insensible to the superior advantages they possess under the auspices of Great Britain; but if such there are, let them learn from the victims of French oppression who daily crowd to these shores, as to an

envied asylum, how they ought to appreciate the prosperity and security which, under the powerful protection of his Majesty's fleets and armies they so liberally enjoy. If his Excellency has hitherto delayed publicly to notice this extraordinary memorial, he has been actuated by the desire of affording to those who might have been deceived an opportunity of acknowledging their error; and several have accordingly come forward and avowed in writing the gross delusion under which their subscriptions were obtained to the document, and their total ignorance of its contents.

The paper in question, such as it is, his Excellency is determined to transmit by the first opportunity to his Majesty's ministers.

Palace, August 23, 1811.

By command of his Excellency,

(Signed) F. LAING,

Acting Public Secretary.

XII.

Extract from a Report of some Maltese Judges to Lieutenant General Oakes, referred to in page 338, *with some Passages from the Refutation drawn up by the British Merchants resident there.*

"A few days since appeared publicly affixed in the commercial rooms, the regulations of a new association of several foreigners of various nations, and a few Maltese for the purpose of Insurance; the first of which is couched in the following terms. Viz. "We, the undersigned, do hereby associate as a company for the purpose of insuring maritime risks, on the equitable principles sanctioned by the laws and usage of Great Britain, and under the regulations hereinafter expressed, pledging ourselves to submit any doubtful claims on the company to the decision of the vice admiralty court of this island, at the requisition of the party insured."

"The said regulation neither has nor can have any validity; on the contrary it ought to be abolished as being in opposition to the orders of his Britannic Majesty, which from the ingress of

his troops into this city, have constantly required that our ancient laws alone should be observed in this island, that the authorities established by our constitution should continue, and that all classes of foreigners should submit to them.

"The laws of this country lib. 1, cap. 33, § 1, 2, limit the cognizance of said causes to the tribunal of commerce and the court of appeals; although there always existed a court for the decision of prize causes. The same laws in lib. 2, cap. 3, § 101, expressly prohibit the submitting commercial causes to the arbitration of any other persons or tribunals, excepting only in lib. 1, cap. 8. § 27, the supreme tribunal; wherefore not even by the mutual consent of parties, is it permitted to carry such causes into other courts without an open violation of those laws, of which his Majesty requires the observance.

"In the mean time the said tribunals will on their part use every means permitted them by the common laws, and the ordinary authority of every judge, to cause the said private regulation to be reputed invalid, in order that the contracting parties may not be deceived by a chimerical derogation, and abolition of a part of the legislation of this island, which is more interesting to the population, and in the possession of which they are guaranteed by the orders of the sovereign, and the affectionate protection of your excellency."

[In reply to this it was alleged by the managers of the British insurance office in a letter to the chairman of the committee of British merchants, that]

"Although the judges assert that the company is an association 'of several foreigners of various nations and a few Maltese,' it will be observed in reference to the annexed printed copy of the articles of the association, that the same is composed of forty British mercantile establishments and gentlemen, *only one foreigner* and four Maltese.

"Surely nothing can be more indecorous than the description thus given by the judges, of a considerable portion of the mercantile establishments of this island, as we have yet to learn how British subjects can be called foreigners when living under the immediate protection of a British government. In point of fact

however, we think we recognize the influence of the spirit, which dictated this designation of British residents, on the judicial proceedings in causes in which they have been parties, occasioning grievances against which they are urged to remonstrate by the double motives of personal interest and national honor.

"It is evident that the judges, either have not comprehended, or have misinterpreted the terms of the company's declaration, which does not imply a right assumed by the company, but a privilege conceded to the insured.

"If the company had declared that they would submit only to the decision of the vice admiralty court, the judges would have had some ground for their assertion; but from the very terms of the pledge, 'to submit to such decision, *if required*,' it clearly and unequivocally results, that they do not object to any competent jurisdiction, and that they leave it at the option of the insured to institute proceedings against them either in the Maltese tribunal of commerce, or in the British vice admiralty court. Hence it follows that the case cited of an Englishman having attempted in the year 1808, to *compel* certain Maltese underwriters to appear in the vice-admiralty court, and the answer of the minister in London, on that occasion, can have no reference whatever to the present case; where no proceedings can possibly be instituted in the vice-admiralty court but by the *mutual consent* of the company and the insured."*

* These are but trifling extracts from a most important communication, which the author hopes he will yet have an opportunity of laying before the public at full length.

No. XIII.

Draft of a Letter made by a Select Committee appointed to prepare a Representation on the Subject, viz. Mr. Woodhead, R. M. Thomas, M. Dennison, G. Moore, I. Wilson; but the Propriety of making any Representation at all being afterwards discussed, it was, on the 8th of August, in the Committee of British Merchants, determined by a Majority of One, not to do so on the alleged Reason that Imports by Licence had decreased—referred to in Page 339.

Malta, June, 1811.

Sir, The late decrease of export from England to this island, as well as to Sicily and other parts of the Mediterranean, having been materially caused by the facility with which certain articles the produce and manufacture of the enemy's country are brought from thence by means of British licences, we request your Excellency will be pleased to cause such measures to be adopted as may appear most expedient to prevent this serious injury to the revenues and industry of Great Britain, whose object in having colonies and possessions must chiefly be to benefit and employ these sources of her prosperity.

Should it appear to your Excellency that the permission to import such articles by licence being discontinued, would benefit either the revenue, the industry or the shipping interest of Great Britain, or of those countries under her protection, we are assured the measure will experience an immediate adoption; and we do trust it will not only so appear, but that your Excellency may be inclined to think it will tend to further those objects and principles by which his Majesty's ministers have been always guided, and which appear to be the aim and effect of British warfare, namely, that of increasing and promoting the trade and revenue of our own country and colonies, and of obstructing and diminishing that of the enemy. We presume to annex a schedule of the articles imported chiefly by licence, which, in our opinion, more immediately interfere with the revenue and industry of Great Britain; and have the honour to be your Excellency's most obedient and humble servants.

Linen and woollen cloths, hardware, and cutlery of all kinds, glass and earthenware, silk manufactures, copper, vitriol, copperas, household furniture, iron, leather, tobacco, German muslins and printed calicoes, red and white lead, spirits.

No. XIV.

Lord Cochrane's Protests, referred to in Pages 346 and 347.

PROTEST. (A)

By this present Declaration and Protest, be it known unto all men, that I, Thomas Cochrane, commonly called Lord Cochrane, have protested, and by these presents do most solemnly protest, against the legality of a certain warrant, issued by William Stevens, examiner and an interpreter to the vice-admiralty court of this island, registered merchant, commission broker, and notary public, calling himself deputy registrar of the said court, and professing to act under an appointment for John Locker, sinecure registrar; and I do further protest against the illegal endeavours to execute the said warrant by John Chapman, deputy-auctioneer at this island, acting for and on behalf of ——— Wood, late private secretary to Lord Castlereagh, a non-resident, enjoying an income of about seven thousand pounds sterling per annum, derived from the sale of prizes and the goods of merchants trading to this island, but calling himself deputy-marshal of the said vice-admiralty court, and professing to act under an appointment from John Jackson, proctor and marshal, contrary to law: and I do protest against all acts of the said John Jackson, in the capacity of marshal, by himself or his deputy; and further, against John Locker, sinecure registrar, and William Stevens, calling himself deputy-registrar, the said John Locker having, under the signature of the said William Stevens, taxed bills of fees and expenses of the aforesaid court of vice-admiralty, wherein the fees of the said John Locker and William Stevens, in their capacity of registrar, deputy-registrar, examiner, interpreter, &c., &c., &c., are made and examined by themselves, and in which various illegal charges were allowed and suffered to be made by John Jackson as proctor, for *attending, fee*

consulting, and *instructing* HIMSELF as marshal; in which *double* capacity he acts, in defiance of the 41st and of the 45th George III., chapter 72. And I do further most solemnly protest against John Sewel, styling himself judge of the aforesaid court, for refusing, by letter, dated the thirteenth of January, 1811, to order satisfaction to be given by the said John Jackson, referring to him, a *judge in his own cause*; and likewise, for not having given any answers to official letters, delivered to him, bearing date the 19th and 20th of February, 1811, on the same subject. And further, I do most solemnly protest against the said John Sewel, for not complying with the act of parliament, which directs, "That a table of fees shall be suspended in some conspicuous part of the court, in which the several judges of the court of vice-admiralty hold their sittings." And I do further protest against all expences and damages given against me, in the cause of a certain privateer, called King George, and also against the legality of all proceedings heretofore had, and which now are or may hereafter be depending in all trials, suits, and decrees whatsoever, in which persons officiating in the said Vice-Admiralty Court have acted, now are acting, or may hereafter act, contrary to law. And, lastly, I do most solemnly protest against the said John Sewell, and all persons in general, who have, do, or shall henceforth, detain my person in any way howsoever, or whereby I am deprived of my personal liberty, and prevented, as a member of parliament, from bringing acts of delinquency to the cognizance of the house of commons, or before such tribunal as the laws of the United Kingdoms authorize.

(Signed) COCHRANE.

This done and protested in La Valetta, Island of Malta, where stamps are not used, this second day of March, 1811,

Before me,

L. S. (Signed) CHARLES EDWARD FENTON,
Notary Public.

PROTEST. (B)

By this public declaration and protest, be it known unto all men, that I, Thomas Cochrane, commonly called Lord Cochrane, have protested, and do by these presents most solemnly protest against John Sewell, LL.D. styling himself judge of the vice-admiralty court of this Island of Malta, for having, contrary to law, and under false pretexts, confined me in the public jail of the said island, and for having there forcibly detained me for the space of three days last past, without the slightest proof of my having been guilty of any crime, or having violated any laws, or even without any legal or other enquiry having been made, within that period, into the matters whereof I am accused, on no better foundation than assertions contained in certain monitions delivered and followed by certain warrants of attachment issued under the false pretence of a contempt of court, in not having answered or complied with the aforesaid monitions, "executed by John Chapman," called in the warrant of the seventh day of February, "late deputy-marshal," but who officiated in that situation without legal appointment or authority. And I do further protest against the said John Sewel, for having, on the second day of this present March, attempted to administer interrogatories, not upon oath, whereby to establish accusations against myself, without any witnesses having been produced or examined in court to substantiate any charge; and further, for having threatened to compel me to answer the said interrogatories illegally administered, under pain of further imprisonment for contempt of court. And I further protest against all proceedings had, holding, or to be held against me, under pretence of a contempt of court, in not having complied with the said monition so illegally executed, and also under pretence of contempt in not having delivered up a paper, called in the said monition, warrants and attachments, and pretended to be a "Table of fees of the judge and other officers of the said vice-admiralty court," and stated to have been by me "taken down and carried away from the registry of the said court;" where it could not have been affixed, unless in defiance of the act of parliament of the 45th George III., chapter

72, which enacts that the "Table of Fees, by which the said "persons of the Admiralty court shall regulate their fees, shall "be suspended in some conspicuous part of the court in which "the several judges of the Vice-Admiralty Court shall hold "their courts." And further, I do protest against any proceedings whatsoever, in the aforesaid Vice-Admiralty Court, for the reasons more fully expressed in the protest hereunto annexed, marked (A.) COCHRANE.

This done and protested at La Valetta, Island of Malta, where stamps are not used, this fourth day of March, 1811,

Before me, in the gaol of Valetta, Malta,
CHARLES EDWARD FENTON,
Notary Public.

No. XV.

ELEGY.

Written in a Quondam Jesuit's College, referred to in p. 382.

Yon clock denotes the hour of busy change,
The bustling merchants, thick as hops, appear;
No more may I among these pillars range,
Lost, (Hervey-like,) in meditation drear.

Another race usurps this sacred spot,
Where once our order taught the holy *word*.
But these men's *words* are best when taken not,
A bill, short-dated, is by all preferred.

'Twas here we toil'd o'er many a musty page,
The pious spinnings of "the fathers'" brains;
Far different sheets these Jesuits' minds engage,
T——'s meek lines, or G——ld's fiery strains.

For wholesome floggings, penitential fasts,
And beads oft told,—a sinful change succeeds:
Clerks now carouse in riotous repasts,
And count out dollars, where we counted beads.

Floggings, indeed, at 'Change-hour still are known,
To single fight see salt and pepper run;
Sad altered times, and much unlike our own,
When we but whipp'd ourselves for private fun.

Our frugal kitchen other cooks have seized,
Who make the pot boil by discounting bills:
Ah! fatal quackery to a purse diseased,
A two months' cure!—Like Leake's or Brodum's pills.

In those, our cells, where once we wept and prayed,
Insuring, thus, a thorny road to heaven;
A surer game's by deeper Jesuits played,
Who nought *insure* without a premium's given.

And see! a notary's shop; perversion sad;
Full in the precincts of our cloisters rise,
Where oaths may, wholesale, for the cash be had,
And God's own name a voucher made for lies.

And there, a cook-shop calls the ungodly crew,
Their business done, to lunch on beef and wine!
Where *Turkey*-merchants may enjoy with *gout*,
A solid meal, when not engaged to dine.

What spirit, worse than Ganganelli's rage,
Has clapped these columns on our fathers' bones!
He but suppressed them, but these men engage
To keep them down with pyramids of stones.

Fear not, ye merchants, *our* Exchange is o'er,
No friar here will shew his nose at noon;
And your fat pillars let their ghosts no more
"Revisit e'en the glimpses of the moon."

But, oh! what horror smites my frantic soul,
As through this chapel, mad with grief, I range:
A private theatre! a devil's hole!
For Jesu's house a damnable Exchange!

When learned elders, to astonished ears,
Expounded truths with energy divine:
Lo! cut and dried, a Harlequin appears,
With slippered Pantaloon and Columbine!

Ah! stage-struck * * * *, thy theatric taste
Hath spread a ruin in these sacred shrines;
How is our worship by thy rigs disgraced,
Our solemn farces by thy pantomimes!

Thy school will prosper;—men are prone to ill,
And here have only native parts to shew:
Clowns, fools, and coxcombs, will attend thee still,
And Shylock's haunt thee from the mart below!

But why to England send for married dames,
"To strut and fret their hour upon the stage;"
Our holy order burned with purer flames,
Virgins alone allayed our amorous rage.

Oh could thy spirit, Saint Ignatius, come!
Could'st thou but *rise*, and in these ruins range!
Ah! there's no *spirit* here, save Jackson's rum,
Within these walls nought *rises* but th' exchange.

Couldst thou but see these motley walls display
Their hieroglyphics, like a mummy's shell,
Here "Venus bathing;"—there—the next new play—
There—lawyers threatening butcher rogues with hell.

What rogues men are, you newspapers confess,
In *wooden* jackets pilloried around:
When *padlocks* guard the freedom of the press,
They'll shortly chain the tables to the ground.

Hark! what mad cries a *golden* age declare!
"Cabal! cab! cab!" from lip to lip resounds,
"Come on, come on, behold our nerves of war,
"We've scraped together,—TWENTY THOUSAND POUNDS!!!

Oh mighty sum! Oh wonderful supply!
Hide your diminished heads ye six small stars!
A squad's prepared to drink your market dry,
And thrust their fingers through your golden bars.

And hark! a sheep-bell calls the gazing flock
With tiny tingling tripping down a string!
Their noses, high in air, the quidnuncs cock,
Tranced in sweet sounds of tingle-tingle-ting!

See, see! on little wheels a neat tin box
Comes gently sliding down the trembling twine;
The infant telegraph a hand unlocks,
Out pops a young gazette, in one short line.

A packet, convoy, or at least a sloop,
The magic characters will now unfold,
Oh horrid blank! the disappointed group
"In vista—nulla," stung with rage, behold.

To fetch *more* news, like blessings, from *above*,
The little box goes jingling up the string.
Oh! that in Malta I should live to prove
That factors run, like *goats*, at ting-ting-ting!

Oh my prophetic soul! the solemn bell,
That to our church once congregations drew,
Now drives the unholy rabble with its knell,
Warning well known to Christian, Turk and Jew!

For him, who quizzing this strange masquerade,
Hints in these lines at things which you see clear,
If chance you wish to know of what he's made,
He's not a *noble*, but a *private here!*

EPITAPH.

Here rests his head, upon his mother's lap,
(Old mother Earth,) one to himself well known;
And now he's dead, if any wear his cap,
And find it fit them, it is their's alone.

A. B. C.

THE END.

J. Gillet, Printer, Crown-court, Fleet-street, London.

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